United Nations A/69/PV.87

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

87th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 5 May 2015, 10.10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 129 (*continued*)

Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War

Special solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on agenda item 129 and adopted resolution 69/267 at its 80th plenary meeting, on 26 February 2015.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, a conflict that brought untold sorrow to humankind. The anniversary also holds particular importance for the United Nations, whose founding took place on the ashes of that ferocious War, which claimed millions of lives.

The Second World War was a time of unspeakable atrocities, of lost faith and devastated humanity. Today we honour the countless victims who lost their lives in the War. This special meeting also affords us an opportunity to recall the General Assembly's firm desire to make every possible effort to prevent and mitigate the human suffering that results from war. Indeed, we must never forget the international community's responsibility to stand up against tyrants, despots and all who attempt to suppress the enduring nature of the human spirit.

Having survived the catastrophe of the Second World War, humankind sought to embrace new means to prevent the recurrence of such tragic events. To that end the United Nations was established, aimed at ensuring unity and harmony among nations. As envisioned in its Charter, the United Nations was founded to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Over the past seven decades, the War has not only shaped the Organization's mission; its lessons also continue to guide our work around the world. Today we stand in solidarity under the guiding principles on which our Organization was founded, including, among others, non-aggression, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the need to protect human rights.

While the Second World War brought about untold misery and suffering, it was also a time when the world witnessed extraordinary bravery. Through the collective heroic efforts of countless men and women, victory was claimed over tyranny and evil. Today we remember and honour the people who lost their lives in the brutal scourge of the Second World War, and pay tribute to those whose memory we must never forget.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Five years have passed since the General Assembly last met to commemorate the end of the most terrible war in the history of humankind and to honour the memory of its victims (see A/64/PV.85). A great deal has happened in those years, but the grandeur and tragedy of the War's events are unfaded and prompt us to pay tribute to those who prevented the world from drowning in an abyss of hatred and pain, at a cost of countless losses and untold sorrow.

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I would like to begin with some words of welcome and gratitude to the veterans who have once again joined us in this Hall, as they did five years ago. It is they who are the most important participants in all the jubil · celebrations. About 200,000 veterans of the War are still living in Russia and, like their comrades-in-arms from other countries, they deserve our most sincere appreciation and our warmest attention and support.

The Soviet people's long four-year struggle against Nazism contributed decisively to the shared victory of the Allies over Hitler. Three-quarters of the Nazi forces were defeated on the Eastern Front, an epic combat that the whole world followed with unflagging attention and hope. Its major milestones are well known — the battle for Moscow, the Nazis' first significant defeat, and the battle of Stalingrad, which marked a turning point in the War. They were the bloodiest in the history of the world, with the losses on both sides in each totalling considerably more than 2 million people. The battle of Kursk was the largest tank action in history, in which more than 2 million men, 6,000 tanks and close to 5,000 aircraft took part. After it, the outcome of the War was virtually a foregone conclusion.

In March 1944 the Red Army reached the Soviet border, and on 1 November the entire country was liberated. And yet the enemy was still not defeated. The Allied leaders' goal of unconditional surrender was not yet achieved. The Soviet troops were still faced with fighting to liberate the many countries in Europe that had been overrun by the Nazis, and the lives of many Soviet soldiers still had to be sacrificed on the altar of victory. More than 600,000 of them lie in Polish soil, 140,000 in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, almost as many in Hungary, around 70,000 in Romania and 26,000 in Austria. Bloody battles erupted on the outskirts of Berlin. As we know, more than 20 million citizens of the multinational Soviet Union altogether gave their lives for the victory over Nazism.

On 2 May 1945, Sergeant Yegorov and Sergeant Kantaria hoisted the banner of victory over the Reichstag. That victory would not have been possible without the heroism of those who fought in many other battles, large and small; without the courage and fortitude of the defenders and residents of besieged Leningrad; without the heroic struggle of the partisans in the occupied territories; and without the self-sacrifice and labour of those who forged victory on the home front.

When we speak of that victory, we remember the valour of the soldiers of the Allied coalition and the brotherhood in arms and unprecedented cooperation of the Allies. Long before a second front was opened in Europe, convoys began to cross the Arctic, delivering much-needed supplies from Great Britain and the United States of America to the Soviet Union's northern ports. The story of the Normandie-Niemen squadron of the French Air Force is famous. Formed on Soviet territory in 1942, it took part in the battle of Kursk, the Belorussian offensive and in engagements in East Prussia. The memory of those and other heroic examples of our joint struggle lives on. That is why there are streets in Russian cities named after the Arctic convoys and the Normandie-Niemen Regiment, and why Stalingrad has given its name to streets and squares in France, Belgium, Italy and elsewhere. The meeting of Soviet and American troops at the Elbe became a shining symbol of that joint struggle and shared victory. The contribution to the common cause of anti-fascists who found the strength to defend their ideals in the face of mortal danger was especially valuable.

But the War was not confined to Europe. In the fierce struggle in the East, China and a number of other countries suffered huge losses, and the War continued there until September 1945. Nor should we forget the battles that were fought on the African continent. In other words, the whole world was affected by the War. Forty countries saw battle action. Many States that were not directly attacked joined the combat, which was hardly surprising considering how high the stakes were. The Nazis intended not only to expand their living space but to drive the development of all human civilization down their shockingly cruel path.

When we read the Nazis' horrifying documents we see that what was behind them was not mere hatred of other peoples but cold, calculated evil that led naturally to putting their theories of racial superiority into practice. Beginning with discriminatory laws and the sowing of xenophobia, they declared publicly that one of their policy goals was to exterminate entire ethnic groups — Jews, Roma, Slavs. In pursuit of that goal they established an entire network of concentration camps all over Europe in which they applied their unthinkably cruel murderous technologies. The death camp at Auschwitz, liberated by Soviet soldiers, has become a symbol of the evil of Nazism's essential inhumanity. Victory alone, a victory whose seventieth anniversary

is being celebrated right now all over Russia and in many other countries, could end that violent bacchanal.

It would seem clear that the historical significance of the victory over fascism can have no truck with opportunistic politicking. Whatever we think of the political and diplomatic twists and turns at the turn of the 1930s and 1940s, the course of history that followed drew a clear line between the forces of good and evil, between the Allied coalition and the Axis Powers. That line was reinforced in the Charter of the United Nations and the decisions of the Nuremberg tribunal. Those who attempt to justify and even glorify Nazism's collaborators today cannot overturn the incontestable verdict of history. It is no accident that such efforts have been condemned a dozen times in relevant General Assembly resolutions.

In our minds, the end of the Second World War is inextricably tied to the creation of the United Nations, which found itself at the centre of a new system of international relations. The very name "United Nations" appeared during the War, since that was what the countries of the Allied coalition called themselves. Succeeding decades have shown that the system we created is not ideal, but it has been able to keep the world from collapsing into a new global catastrophe, it has given States a platform and the tools for dialogue on an equal footing on our most pressing issues and for settling disputes. It is our duty to treat those gains carefully and responsibly. The price that was paid for them was too high and too much is at stake for future generations.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We are here today to solemnly mark the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the defeat of Nazism. We are gathered to mourn all those men, women and children who, soldiers and civilians alike, lost their lives as victims of the War. We are also gathered in order to never forget the darkest hours of European history, when totalitarianism, despotism, hatred, intolerance, racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia led to a global conflagration that brought untold sorrow to humankind for the second time in one generation.

Our aim today is to remember the innocent victims of that War, but also to recall the basic values that guided the creation of our Organization. In that context, we can do no better than to bear in mind the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, by which we agreed

> "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

At the same time, this is also the right moment to express our deep gratitude to the many millions of men and women from around the globe who gave their lives so that nations in Asia, Africa and Europe could live in peace, security and respect for human rights. Together, the Second World War and the unprecedented crime of the Holocaust not only cost Europe tens of millions of human lives and devastated great parts of the continent; the War also left Europe deeply divided for more than four decades. Europeans had to wait until 1990 for the Charter of Paris for a New Europe to proclaim that "Europe whole and free is calling for a new beginning" and to pay tribute to "the courage of men and women" and "the strength of the will of the peoples" that helped to make that possible.

That message also reverberates in the declaration adopted in April 2003 at the conclusion of the negotiations on the accession to the European Union of 10 countries of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe, in which 25 European Union members, old and new, underlined their common wish "to make Europe a continent of democracy, freedom, peace and progress" and their determination

> "to avoid new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union".

Since 1990, that new Europe of democracy, peace and unity of the Charter of Paris has suffered a number of very painful setbacks, but the European Union and

its now 28 member States remain firmly committed to those goals. This anniversary must also serve to remind us of our commitment to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or sovereignty of any State. There is no place for the use of force and coercion to change internationally recognized borders. This anniversary should lead us to redouble our efforts to settle disputes by peaceful means. The European Union and its member States are deeply committed to the core principles outlined in the Charter of the United Nations, which are also enshrined in the fundamental documents of the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe.

We need to remember the causes and overcome the legacies of the war and build on the progress made since the end of the Second World War in promoting democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms. We pay tribute to all those who fought for liberty and peace. Their example should inspire us to come together, to look forward with hope and to redouble our efforts for peace and understanding. Today, the Members of the United Nations must play this crucial role together.

Mr. Mahmadaminov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of all the victims of the Second World War.

As a representative of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), I have the honour to read out the statement of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the CSTO — the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan — concerning the seventieth anniversary of the victory of the Second World War.

> "On the eve of the seventieth anniversary of the victory against fascism in the Second World War, from 1941 to 1945, we, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, pay tribute to the tens of millions of our compatriots who died on the front lines of the War, as well as in partisan fighting, bombings, occupation and concentration camps from hunger, cold and blockades. We also pay tribute to the millions of people, including children, who died for this victory.
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> "We remember what was achieved 70 years ago and we underscore that this victory was achieved only through the combined efforts of many people for the sake of freedom and opportunity and for those people to determine their own path and for development. We must recall that war against the ideology of hatred when we seek to neutralize new challenges and threats.
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> "The victory in 1945, fought on behalf of the overall values of all humankind, was reconfirmed with the adoption, on 26 February, on the initiative of our States, of resolution 69/267, entitled 'Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War'. States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization categorically reject and decisively condemn any attempt to rewrite history or to distort and revise the outcome of the Second World War. We consider it unacceptable to attempt to glorify Nazism or any type of violent nationalism. We also reject any cynical attempts to raise to the ranks of national heroes those who fought against the anti-Hitler coalition during the Second World War or who collaborated with the Nazis. We believe that the countries that defeated fascism need to prevent any recurrence of neo-fascism, chauvinism or other forms of xenophobia, as well as the popularization of radical nationalism, including among young people.
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> "History has shown us the danger of intolerance, discrimination, extremism and hatred on ethnic, racial and religious grounds. We consider unacceptable any retention or introduction of new dividing lines on already closed borders; hotbeds of hatred, tension and confrontation in the world and its division into spheres of influence; as well as interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States. States must assume the additional responsibility to prevent any kind of intolerance or discrimination and we, as descendants of the victors, should serve as examples in that regard. We are convinced that the peaceful settlement of conflicts, while observing and complying with the norms of international law and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, is the only way to preserve current and future generations from the scourge of new wars.
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> "In commemoration of the victory, we also note the beginning of the work in Nuremberg of the International Military Tribunal, which was the

legal underpinning of the final breaking of fascism. The Nuremberg trials were aimed at preventing the outbreak of wars, acts of genocide, torture and other atrocities. We call on the international community to respect and defend the principles of international law, which have been developed as an inalienable and essential foundation of the current world order and should not be subject to revision.

"One of the main outcomes of this great victory was the establishment of the United Nations. It is based on the philosophy of multilateralism and the collective way of acting and the formation of reliable mechanisms to ensure international peace. We believe that the Charter of the United Nations remains the basis for the development of international relations. Noting the contribution of the peoples of the world in the fight against Nazism, we call on all countries to honour the memory of the victims of the War. We believe we must support the memory and commemoration of those who were lost in the War.

"In memory of those who died while fighting for the freedom and independence of our peoples and with deep gratitude to the veterans, to whom we are indebted, we are confident that the anniversary of the great victory will become a day to celebrate the victory of peace and harmony."

Mr. Kolga (Estonia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Latvia, Lithuania and my own country, Estonia. We fully align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union.

Today's meeting is about remembering the innocent victims and loss of lives in the Second World War, but also about the basic values that led to the creation of the United Nations. Recalling the past we have to admit, unfortunately, that the personal, psychological, demographic, economic and political implications of the Second World War are felt to this day. We also remain very conscious of the fact that it is not just the two World Wars that have brought untold sorrow to humankind over the past hundred years.

Regrettably, our efforts for peace have too often failed, and many current crises and conflicts remain unresolved. This anniversary must remind us of our commitment to refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or sovereignty of any State. It should also lead us to redouble our efforts to settle disputes by peaceful means. We are deeply committed to the core principles outlined in the United Nations Charter and we firmly believe that there is no place for the use of force or coercion to change internationally recognized borders. The United Nations was created to put an end to a world where might makes right. We — every one of us — should ensure that the dark days of war and injustice that followed from such a world will never ever prevail again.

While sincerely commemorating all the victims of the Second World War and paying solemn tribute to all the women and men from all around the globe who fought for liberty and peace, we know that the War left Europe deeply divided for more than four decades. While we commemorate the end of atrocities arising from the World War, we must also remember that for many European countries — our three countries among them — the end of the Second World War did not bring freedom but continuing oppression and injustice and more crimes against humanity. The Baltic States could not be among the founders of the United Nations, as they had been occupied first by Soviet, then by Nazi, and then again by Soviet troops. For the men of the Baltic States, the Second World War was particularly poignant because they were forcibly recruited into armed forces on both sides of the battle.

At the time of the creation of the United Nations, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were illegally annexed to the Soviet Union and could liberate themselves only decades later. This is our story. It cannot be denied or downplayed to irrelevance, and it definitely cannot be called a rewriting of history. Therefore, while commemorating the victims of this War, we also pay tribute to the tens of thousands of our compatriots who sacrificed their lives in the fight for our independence after the World War had officially ended in Europe. Our thoughts are also with all victims of the Nazi and Soviet occupation regimes who were deported and condemned to die far from their homes.

Remembering that the United Nations was created to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, we should be inspired by all this and redouble our efforts to achieve peace and understanding in the world.

Ms. Mościcka-Dendys (Poland): Almost 70 years have passed since the end of the Second World War, which was the most terrible, cruel and bloody war in the history of humankind. Poland, my own country, was the first victim of Nazi aggression when, on 1 September 1939, we were invaded by Germany, marking the beginning of the Second World War in Europe. Some 17 days after the German aggression, Soviet troops invaded Poland from the East, and soon afterwards all Polish territory was occupied.

Poland experienced the worst of both Hitler's and Stalin's particular forms of ideological madness. Genocide, politically motivated killings, ethnic cleansing and physical destruction became part of daily life in occupied Poland. Ours was the region where Nazism and Soviet communism started as allies and finally clashed and showed their worst face. In his book about Eastern Europe, Yale historian Timothy Snyder calls it "Bloodlands".

Poland paid a high price during the Second World War. Over 6 million Polish citizens, including 3 million Polish Jews, were killed. For every 1,000 Polish citizens, 220 were lost. We also suffered immense material losses. At least 83 per cent of the main part of our capital city, Warsaw, was in ruins. There was hardly a family that was not tragically affected by the War, and the end of the War did not automatically bring full freedom and independence. Although Polish soldiers were fighting on all fronts in the Second World War, in Norway, France — including the beaches of Normandy — Britain, Italy or North Africa, they did not experience the freedom they hoped to get for their own country. Poland fell under Soviet domination until 1989, when our full sovereignty was finally regained.

Today it is our responsibility to keep the memory of the Second World War alive and draw lessons. We must remember that, as Anne Applebaum once put it, half of Europe was liberated at the cost of enslaving the other for 50 years. What does that teach us? What lessons can we draw for the future? On this Day of Remembrance, we should honour all the victims of the War and remember the enormous tragic suffering and destruction it brought to people in many corners of the world. We should also remember that the United Nations was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In the course of the 70 years that have passed since the end of the Second World War, many instruments have been created to achieve that goal.

Unfortunately, we have not always been successful. The tragic Balkan War in the 1990s made us understand that Europe, despite its tragic past, was not yet free from the nightmare of war and bloodshed. In 2014, another dramatic conflict arose on our doorstep, and the United Nations has not found an adequate response to mitigate the situation. We face conflicts in many other corners of the world — in Africa, in the Middle East and elsewhere. We must be resolute and consistent in acting in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. We owe it to those who lost their lives fighting for peace and a brighter future.

Ms. Burlacu (Romania): Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Head of Delegation of the European Union. Acting in its national capacity, my delegation would also like to make some additional remarks.

The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations provides the opportunity — and obliges us — to reflect in depth on the past and future of our common action on the international scene. Indeed, it is important to pay tribute to all victims of the Second World War.

Back in 1945, Romania was the fourth largest contributor of manpower during the Second World War, after the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom. Accordingly, soon after the end of the War, the highest distinctions were awarded by both the Soviet Union and the United States to the King of Romania, Mihai I — who is still alive today — for his role in ending the confrontation. We are very proud of Romania's contribution to the final Allied victory in the Second World War.

At first, in 1941, Romania entered the war against the Soviet Union in order to recover its lost territorial integrity. But in August 1944, following the removal of the Antonescu regime, it switched sides and joined the Allied Powers in fighting Germany, in order to preserve its territorial integrity. Between August 1944 and May 1945, Romania engaged in battle over 275,000 troops, liberating many cities and villages also in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria, with the sacrifice of 170,000 dead and wounded.

The United Nations is an Organization born on the loss and suffering of millions of people and of their shared hope for a better future, in which human dignity and peace are the core values. Those ideals and the spirit that inspired the creation of the United Nations are still far from being transformed into reality. The

resurgence of conflicts in many parts of the world, especially during the past few years, most notably in the Middle East, the rise of non-State actors driven by extremist ideology are putting a heavy strain on the international security system.

While it is clear that the security landscape has fundamentally changed, it is important to stress that the core of our collective security system is the same. The obligation to refrain from the use of force in international relations is as valid today as it was in 1945. The necessity of common action is as valid today as it was 70 years ago, exponentially enhanced by the speed of interaction in a globalized world.

We need to be mindful that without addressing the root causes of conflicts — multifaceted, including economic, social and, last but not least, political aspects — the international community will not be able to attain a sustainable peace. Repeated crises have shown that pre-emptive interventions are not sufficient and must be integrated into a complex set of actions for the long term. Our vision on the preconditions for a sustainable peace was articulated a long time ago by the distinguished Romanian diplomat Nicolae Titulescu, who served twice as President of the League of Nations. His reflections are still valid today:

> "First of all, winners in war must forget their hatred and understand that all are suffering because of war ... Then, there is a need for all peoples to blend together, to see each other, to talk to each other, to discuss face to face about their common interests."

Referring to causes that provoke and amplify international tensions, Titulescu advocated that the world needs to revise not treaties but its own mindset. In this context — and bearing in mind the nature of today's threats — a very strong emphasis must be placed on education, especially in post-conflict or, as is more often the case now, in areas liberated from terrorism, in order to prevent new atrocities in the future and allow social recovery. The United Nations and its various bodies have an important role to play in the application of all these concepts. The participation of women is also a key to ending conflicts and building development.

After 60 years of United Nations membership, Romania continues to advocate a vision of sustainable peace based on a shared sense of security, achieving stability while building mutual trust and knowledge between nations, including a careful analysis of divergences and identifying ways to address them. The accepted means for solving conflicts must be only political and legal. The spirit of human solidarity must prevail over military strength. This conviction became embedded in Romania's foreign policy, and promoting the rule of law in international relations has been a constant line of action for Romanian foreign policy.

Commemorations such as this one are times of reflections on lessons learned, especially the painful ones. A special consideration should be kept in mind as regards the Holocaust; we remain engaged in honouring the memory of its victims and strongly condemn any attempts to distort or deny it, as well as in combating anti-Semitism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Also on lessons learned, Romania prides itself on its policy of inclusiveness.

To conclude, let us reflect upon the words of the second Secretary-General, the lamented Dag Hammarskjöld: "The United Nations was not created to take humankind to heaven, but to save it from hell". We should all acknowledge the immense work done by the United Nations since its creation, as well as the immense tasks that remain in front of us. The best way that we the United Nations, together, can honour the victims is to act with determination to achieve progress towards the ideals for which millions of people gave their lives.

Ms. Power (United States of America): Seventy years ago today — on 5 May 1945 — soldiers from the United States Army 11th Armored Division liberated the Nazi concentration camp at Mauthausen. It is estimated that nearly 200,000 prisoners had passed through Mauthausen's gates since 1938 — including Jews, Roma, Spanish Republicans, communists, and members of the international brigades from Czechoslovakia, Poland and other countries. Around half of the prisoners — 100,000 men, women, and children — were shot, hanged, tortured, starved to death or gassed in a chamber disguised to look like a communal shower. On the door of the chamber was a small window, through which visiting Nazi officials came to watch the gassing.

The SS accelerated their killing as the liberators approached. On 20 April, 3,000 prisoners from Mauthausen's infirmary were marked for death. The camp's gas chamber was used for the last time on 28 April. The American soldiers found the last victims in the chamber with their clothes on; the executioners,

it seemed, had little reason to pretend anymore that the chamber was a shower.

Of course, the horrors of the Second World War took many forms beyond concentration camps. Tatyana Savicheva was just 11 years old when the siege of Leningrad began. Living with her mother and three siblings, she kept a journal of her experiences, which she eventually burned for warmth. But she held onto a small diary, whose sole entries read as follows:

> "Zhenya died on 28 December at 12 p.m. 1941. Grandma died on 25 January at 3 p.m. 1942. Leka died on 17 March at 5 a.m. 1942. Uncle Vasya died on 13 April at 2 o'clock after midnight 1942. Uncle Lesha died on 10 May at 4 p.m. 1942. Mother died on 13 May at 7.30 a.m. 1942. Savichevs died. Everyone died. Only Tanya is left."

Tatyana's relatives were among some 800,000 Russians who starved to death during the siege of Leningrad — 800,000. Tatyana was rescued in 1942, but her health never recovered. She died as well, on 1 July 1944. She was 14. Today, as we gather to mark the end of the Second World War, the scale of the loss is as incomprehensible as ever. And the details continue to haunt us. Consider that, for every resident of Dresden, there were 42.8 cubic metres of rubble. Or consider the "disquieting smells" that emerged from basements and rubble when temperatures rose from winter to spring in Warsaw — a time when, one reporter wrote, "no one ... has the consolation of thinking that all of Warsaw's quarter-million dead were properly buried".

As we pay tribute to the tens of millions of people who died in the war, including more than 400,000 Americans — we must remember why they gave their lives. We must remember why the Allies fought their way to liberate death camps like Mauthausen; and why children like 11-year-old Tatyana helped dig trenches to defend their besieged city of Leningrad. They fought because, as Winston Churchill so eloquently put it in September 1939, shortly after the Nazis invaded Poland:

> "This is not a question of fighting for Danzig ... We are fighting to save the whole world from the pestilence of Nazi tyranny and in defense of all that is most sacred to man ... It is a war ... to establish, on impregnable rocks, the rights of the individual, and it is a war to establish and revive the stature of man."

Through countless acts of bravery and sacrifice — some documented, most that we will never know — they succeeded in defending and eventually reviving the stature of men and women.

They are the reason we are here today and why the United Nations exists. The idea of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights confirmed, is one of the impregnable rocks upon which our global order is anchored, as is the system of international justice that today is helping us hold warlords and dictators accountable, which was first conceived of at Nuremberg.

But if we are truly to honour their sacrifice, we must do more than memorialize; we must constantly ask ourselves whether we are doing enough to defend the principles they fought for; enough to ensure the rights that they affirmed do not exist only on paper. Those principles are ridiculed by Governments that gas and barrel-bomb their own people and use starvation as a weapon of war, as the Al-Assad regime continues to do. And they are weakened by regimes that hold 100,000 of their citizens in prison camps, working them to death and forcing children to watch their parents' executions, as is happening today in North Korea.

Millions of people gave up their lives because they believed our world had no place for crimes like these. We are in awe of their sacrifice and we owe it to them, to ourselves and to future generations to live up to the principles that they fought for.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the convening of this special meeting of the General Assembly commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the victory in the world war against fascism. On this important occasion, we profoundly remember the innocent victims of the war and pay the highest tribute to the brave martyrs who sacrificed their valuable lives to victory of the world over fascism and to world peace, civilization and human progress.

The Second World War was a dark page in human history. As pointed out in General Assembly resolution 69/267, of February 2015, the Second World War brought untold suffering to Asia, Europe, Africa, the Pacific and other places in the world. The war wrought unprecedented havoc on human civilization. Meanwhile, the Second World War was also a great war in human history, in which justice defeated evil, light defeated darkness, and the progressive defeated the reactionary. All of the peace-loving nations formed a

global anti-fascist coalition which, through painstaking and heroic fighting, claimed victory in the war against fascism, with far-reaching and profound consequences for human civilization and progress.

In commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the victory in the global war against fascism and the establishment of the United Nations, the international community will hold a series of commemorative activities. The Chinese Government will hold elaborate activities in commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the Chinese people's war of resistance against Japan and the world war against fascism.

The Chinese war against Japan was part of the world's anti-fascist war. As the main battlefield in the East of the world's fight against fascism, the war in China broke out the earliest and lasted the longest, and in the process the Chinese people made a huge national sacrifice: according to the incomplete statistics, the death toll among the Chinese people, including military and civilians, totaled more than 35 million. In 1937 values, the direct economic loss totalled more than $100 billion and indirect totalled $500 billion.

China's war of resistance against Japan collaborated with and supported the war efforts of the Allied Powers on the European and Pacific battlefields. Therefore, they were of great strategic significance. In the process of China's war of resistance against Japan, the world Allied Powers — the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom and France and the anti-fascist coalition — provided valuable material and human support to the Chinese people. The anti-fascist fighters in Korea, Viet Nam, Canada, India, New Zealand, Poland, Denmark and even Germany, Austria, Romania, Bulgaria and Japan participated directly in China's war of resistance against Japan. The Chinese people will never forget the countries and international friends who contributed morally and materially to the Chinese people's war of resistance against Japan. We will never forget the foreign friends who provided support to Chinese refugees following the massacre of Nanjing and other tragedies. We will never forget the voluntary martyrs from various countries who gave their lives on the Chinese battlefield.

The victory in the world war against fascism was won through the major sacrifice made by the people of the world, including the people of China. This war should serve as an important lesson to the people of the world that the past should be remembered, not forgotten, as a guide for the future. History should not be forgotten; to forget history is tantamount to betrayal. Any words and deeds that try to water down, negate or glorify the history of aggression will not be tolerated by any people or country, including those victimized during the Second World War. The international community must be vigilant against such words and deeds. We emphasize that history should not perpetuate hate but call on people to respect and preserve peace. Only by remembering the pains of the War can we see the value of peace; only by remembering history can we save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Over the past 70 years, the world has undergone profound changes. History has changed the face of humankind; peace, development cooperation and a win-win era have opened before us. The configuration of international forces favours peace and development. More favourable conditions have been put in place for overall stability in the international situation and for the promotion of joint development. China is ready to work with the wider membership of the United Nations to take stock of the overall world situation, follow the general trends of the time and stick to principles of mutual respect and equality, joint development with a cooperative approach for a win-win situation, a joint, integrated, cooperative and sustainable security doctrine, and cultural tolerance, inclusivity, exchanges and cross-pollination, with a view to forging together a new type of international relations with the all-win principle at its core so as to promote the joint future of humanity and better to serve the people.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Seventy years ago, on 25 April 1945, two weeks before the signing of the Karlshorst act on the unconditional surrender of the fascist regime and the end of the War in Europe, two events took place almost simultaneously in far-flung corners of the world whose deeper implications have, unfortunately, not been fully understood or recognized even today.

On that spring day, not far from the city of Torgau, on the Elbe, Red Army troops met United States troops. As a result of that meeting, which has become a symbol of the Allies' brotherhood in arms, what remained of the armed forces of the Nazi regime was divided into two parts. That same day, thousands of kilometres from war-ravaged Europe, in San Francisco, the representatives of 50 countries, including Belarus, gathered at the conference that laid the foundations for the United Nations. Through Heaven's will, the spirit of Elbe and

the spirit of the United Nations were born and came together on one and the same day. Those two events were the harbingers of a new hope for humankind.

Unfortunately, those events did not mark the advent of an era of cooperation and trust. The Cold War and the Iron Curtain not only divided the European continent but for long decades defined the logic of confrontation and mutual deterrence as the prevailing imperative of world policy, an imperative that did not, however, prevent either the fall of the Iron Curtain or the end of the Cold War.

Today we believe that the so-called zero-sum game is the only possible way for human society to exist, and that the domination and oppression of the weak and the silencing of dissenting voices by the strong is a natural driving force of history.

In recent decades, we have heard more sceptical voices questioning why today's world needs to remember the lessons of the Second World War. Yes, it was a tragedy, yes, the victims suffered, but the world has changed over the decades and has moved ahead in its development. Is not it time to turn the page of history and to stop being shackled by antiquated ideas?

No, it is not time, and it will never be time, because the last day of humankind's living memory of that global catastrophe will be the first day of what will truly be the last world war. In a world filled with nuclear weapons, it cannot be otherwise.

So why do we need this living memory of the War? Why do we need to know that for the hundreds of millions of people who had settled and currently live in the territory of the former Soviet Union, the abbreviation "SS" will never be associated with anything but cruelty, genocide and death?

Why it is offensive not to realize the real contribution of the Soviet Union to victory over fascism or at least recognize whose side the Red Army fought on in that War?

Why do people the world over need to know about Khatyn and Trostenets, Oradour and Babi Yar, Auschwitz and Lidice? Why do they need to know about the circumstances and the history of those tragedies, which have left such scars on the heart of humankind?

This knowledge and memory is not only our moral human debt to the tens of millions of victims of the War and to those who found the strength and courage to resist the Nazis; it is also part of a sense of gratitude and respect for the heroism of those who gave their lives to stop the establishment of a new world order based on racial hatred, militant nationalism and intolerance.

As a poet once rightly said, "It is not the dead who need it, but the living, too".

We must remember the lessons of the Second World War for the sake of our own future. Those who forget the lessons of history are condemned to repeat it.

As long as States seriously consider strategies based on the right of chosen nations to global or regional domination and to transform the environment according to their own subjective ideals; and as long as calls for the recognition of diversity and of ways forward towards the progressive development of human society remain just voices crying in the wilderness, then an understanding of the fragility of our social world and of the unpredictability of any violent transformation of society will not be possible. As long as restraint, willingness to listen, tolerance and compassion continue to be considered in international politics as signs of weakness and the threat of force, pressure, blackmail and sanctions all are praised; and as long as political and military strategies that contemplate the use of nuclear weapons exist, we cannot and have no right to believe that the lessons of the Second World War have been properly understood.

Coming into the General Assembly Hall today, participants may have seen on the first floor the main stand of the photo exhibit organized by eight fraternal countries in the memory of the heroes and victims of the Second World War. The name of the exhibit, "The Last World War: Remembering for Peace", reflects not just a naïve hope or a purely artistic approach; it represents suffering and a message to all States Members of the United Nations that through their practical actions, openness and movement towards one another, including in the United Nations, and making use of the specific opportunities presented by the United Nations summit to be held in September, the original spirit of the United Nations and of Elbe can be revived.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): This weekend, countries across the world will pause and mourn the millions of innocent men, women and children who lost their lives in the Second World War. Whatever flag they followed, whether civilian or soldier, we will remember them.

In our remembrance, we will also celebrate the heroism and extraordinary courage of our veterans who

liberated Europe and brought to an end nearly six years of conflict. In the United Kingdom, church bells will ring and beacons will be lit in celebration, just as they were seven decades ago.

We will never forget the sacrifice and service of our men and women who helped defeat fascism. Nor will we forget the bravery of our allies, including 8 million Commonwealth citizens, who fought by our side.

In this seventieth-anniversary year of the United Nations, let us never forget the very first line in our United Nations Charter: our pledge to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

The Second World War showed us the darkest side of humankind. It redefined our understanding of anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance. Many perpetrators of these horrific crimes are still being brought to justice today. Yet from the ashes of the conflict arose an Organization dedicated to promoting the best of humankind — one committed to fundamental human rights, to the dignity and equality of men and women, and to preserving international peace and security. When we hear the words of the Charter of the United Nations, let us all remember the price the world paid to agree those shared values. Recalling that terrible cost today must give us added impetus to protect and preserve our values from the threats they face.

Winston Churchill said that the statesman who resorted to conflict was no longer the master of policy, but the slave of unforeseeable and uncontrollable events. We have seen such events arise in previously unimaginable ways through the brutality of Al-Assad and the emergence of groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Indeed, it is sad to reflect that the regime's air attacks against the Syrian people have now gone on longer than the London Blitz of the Second World War.

Amid these new threats to international peace and security, challenges to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States continue as they did 70 years ago. We should all welcome the peace and prosperity that the European Union has helped foster over past decades. But we must also recognize that on its borders a flagrant disregard for sovereignty persists, one that has brought violence and instability to the wider European region.

As Members of the United Nations, it is incumbent upon us all to live up to the values of the United Nations Charter. There have been times over the past 70 years whn all Members have failed to do so. As we commemorate those who gave their lives in the Second World War, we should draw on the strength, determination and unity of purpose that they showed to bring liberty to Europe. In doing so, let us ensure that the United Nations remains a fitting legacy to their sacrifice.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): Today we are celebrating a key landmark in modern history: the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. I congratulate all representatives on the seventieth anniversary of our victory over fascism. Today we remember and pay tribute to how determination and courage can triumph in the face of the greatest of odds. That victory symbolizes our collective unity in the pursuit of peace over the forces of conflict and hostility. That shared victory also represents the highest principles of equality and harmony over intolerance, discrimination and genocide. Those values served to strongly unite the Soviet Union, the United States, China, Great Britain, France and many other countries that stood for truth and the unity of humankind.

That dark phase of history saw millions of people killed all over the world, including millions of civilians from more than 60 countries who were subject to horrific suffering, unjust trials, violence, humiliation and fear.

Some of the previous statements made by my colleagues moved me also to reflect a bit on the love story that took place in my own Abdrakhmanov family. It took place during the siege of Leningrad, which the American Ambassador mentioned. It was there, while defending one of the most beautiful cities in the world, that my uncle Esmurat, an officer in the Soviet Army, met a Russian woman no less beautiful by the equally lovely name of Anastasia. They served together in the army, married and were eventually demobilized from the Red Army. They then returned to Kazakhstan, where they lived happily beginning in the 1940s with their three daughters in a big family. They left Kazakhstan in the mid-1990s for family reasons, and they now rest in peace in the Russian city of Kaliningrad, on the Baltic Sea.

My uncle's older brother — my father, Kudaigbergen — served in the Red Army from 1939 to 1946. He survived. But while we honour him and the other soldiers who fought valiantly on the battlefield, today we also grieve and honour the memory of all those who gave their lives, dying as prisoners in concentration camps or as collateral victims, including

martyred women, children and the elderly. By the end of the War, more than 20 million people of the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional Soviet society had been killed. Of Kazakhstan's 6.2 million citizens, approximately 1.7 million — or 27 per cent of the population — also fought in the battle against fascism. Forty-four per cent of them were killed, which amounts to more than 600,000 people.

Wars are not only fought on the front lines and trenches; millions of people also supported the war effort behind the scenes just as heroically as our soldiers. We are deeply grateful to those — the elderly, women and children — who supported from the home front those who were falling from fatigue and exhaustion. According to statistics, for every soldier on the war front, five to eight people worked as unsung and unknown heroes. More than 700,000 Kazakhstan citizens made up regiments during the War, which required labour-intensive efforts. In other words, one out of every four citizens of my republic contributed to building defence installations or worked in war-related factories and power plants.

I present those statistics not to make a dramatic statement to impress the Assembly, but rather to draw attention to our common history and to build understanding among us all. All countries throughout the world that were impacted by the Second World War suffered irreparable losses, with grief inflicted upon every family. Those scars and wounds persist today through the loss of millions of loved ones, who are deeply mourned. The sacrifices of our men and women call for our highest tribute to them. They serve as inspiration to future generations to go forth on the path of peace. Their tragedies are a solemn reminder that the aiding or abetting of violence, or even indifference, can inevitably lead to unspeakable and horrifying tragedies of a global scale. That is not the path we should take in the twenty-first century, despite the real threats that we face today. This experience should lead us to avoid a repetition of the Cold War — or the raging conflicts we see around the world.

We need to pursue and defend a world order based on security and justice. That is what in the United Nations we call the new post-2015 agenda of social transformation, with an overarching culture of peace and with new forms of bilateral and multilateral relations.

I again congratulate all representatives on the anniversary of this great victory.

Mr. Prosor (Israel): Before I begin, I want to thank Ambassador Dapkiunas and the Government of Belarus for the special tree-planting ceremony that took place earlier.

Seventy-five years ago, at the dawn of the Second World War, Europe was locked in the grip of tyranny. Hitler's Reich had already conquered huge swaths of Europe, and the shadow of oppression grew day by day as the Nazis subjugated, devastated and exterminated anyone they deemed different and inferior. With the armies of fascism advancing, the Allied forces knew they had no choice but to liberate Europe from the grip of tyranny. History and circumstance called for bravery, and a generation of men and women answered the call.

To paraphrase Winston Churchill, they fought on the beaches, they fought on the landing grounds, they fought in the fields and in the streets, they fought in the hills; they never surrendered. We owe our freedom to the courage and determination of the Allied armies — the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, Canada, France and other countries — that fought to restore freedom to Europe. The nations that joined together to defeat the Nazis did not always agree, but despite their political differences, they knew that evil had to be stopped.

The losses were immense — the Russians alone lost over 20 million people. It was a terrible price to pay. They stood up to the forces of nature, they stood up to the Nazis' evil human nature. The people of Israel will never forget the bravery of and the sacrifices made by the Russian people.

Today we honour all those who made victory possible. Some of those people — the veterans — are with us today. We also mourn the tens of millions of victims of history's darkest hours.

For Israel and the Jewish people, the Second World War is synonymous with the Holocaust. Families were torn apart, vibrant communities destroyed, and one third of the Jewish people — including 1 million children — were murdered. We are still haunted by the devastation. The numbers tattooed on the arms of our parents and grandparents are an enduring reminder of the horrors they suffered, of a time when a person was a number rather than someone's father or brother or son.

The passage of time now threaten to cloud the world's memory. With every passing year, the number of survivors, veterans and witnesses left to recount their first-hand experiences diminishes. Therefore, the

responsibility falls to us to ensure that the lessons of history are passed on to future generations.

Freedom is once again under attack. The radical Islamists marching across the Middle East and North Africa are every bit as determined and dangerous as the Nazi forces that marched across Europe.

Seventy-five years ago, men, women and children were rounded up and murdered because of what they believed, where they came from, how they looked and whom they loved. The same crimes are taking place in the Middle East. Activists and political opponents are being silenced, homosexuals are being hanged and Christians are being beheaded.

Make no mistake, evil is alive and well — and not just in the Middle East. In the heart of civilized Europe, angry mobs can be heard chanting "Gas the Jews," firebombs have been thrown at synagogues, young men are afraid to walk down the street wearing a kippah, and a kosher grocery store is targeted for attack.

The writing is on the wall. Former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin once said, "If an enemy says he seeks to destroy us, believe him. Don't doubt him for a moment."

History has taught us that Jewish lives can never be entrusted to another people or another nation. We must always be able to defend ourselves by ourselves. The State of Israel is the fulfilment of that promise. Never again. Never again will Jews be rounded up like cattle and marched to their death. Never again will the world think that Jews can be targeted with impunity.

We know the evil that man is capable of, and we know that some things are worth fighting for. Freedom is worth fighting for. Equality is worth fighting for. Democracy is worth fighting for.

Seventy years ago, a generation of men and women sacrificed in war so that we could inherit freedom, equality and democracy. We cannot allow those sacrifices to be made in vain. With courage and conviction, we must now fight for the ideals for which they lived and died.

General Douglas MacArthur once said:

> "We have known the bitterness of defeat and the exaltation of triumph, and from both we have learned there can be no turning back. We must go forward to preserve in peace what we won in war."

The time has come for us to be united in purpose, united in valour and united as nations, so that we too may pass on the gifts of freedom, equality and democracy to our children and our grandchildren.

Mr. Samvelian (Armenia): At today's solemn meeting, I represent a State whose people suffered one of the greatest losses during the Great Patriotic War and made a paramount contribution to achieving the great victory, a victory through enormous and heroic sacrifice. We believe it is our shared duty to carefully preserve its legacy and do all that we can for countries and peoples alike to draw lessons from the Second World War and prevent new threats.

At the beginning of the War, Armenia had a population of less than 1.5 million. While an estimated 500,000 Armenians served in the War, almost half of them sacrificed their lives for liberty. As one of the 15 republics of the Soviet Union, Armenia made its fair contribution during the War, helping to secure victory against Nazi Germany and its allies.

The years of war were a hard, heroic and gallant time in the life of the republic and the entire country. During the War, a large number of Armenian officers attained top positions in the Red Army command, including some 60 generals. Four of them would finish their military careers as marshals, the highest military rank of the Soviet Union. Those statistics make the Armenians, despite their relatively small number, the fourth most heavily represented ethnic group in the highest positions in the Soviet armed forces, behind only the Russians, the Ukrainians and Belarusians.

All together, some 70,000 Armenian soldiers received various medals and were decorated with awards for their bravery and service during the War. Armenian citizens were also active in the resistance groups, better known as the partisan movement, which operated behind the front lines, not only in Soviet territory but also in the other theatres of war, including in France, the Netherlands, Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Greece. Most of the Armenian partisans were former Soviet prisoners of war who had escaped their Nazi captors.

The vast majority of Armenians in the diaspora, themselves mostly survivors or descendants of survivors of the Armenian genocide, also supported the Allied war efforts. The Armenian community of the United States, numbering between 150,000 to 200,000 at the time, supplied more than 18,000 young men and

women to fight in the United States army. Thousands of Armenians fought under the French tricolour. Missak Manouchian, an Armenian resistance fighter, was captured and executed by the Nazis in 1944. Together with more than 20 members of his cell, he remains a much-respected figure in modern French history. Armenian communities in the Middle East and the West donated a considerable amount of money to the Soviet Government to help construct a series of tanks for the Red Army. Those tanks were named after David of Sassoun, the hero of an Armenian medieval epic, and General — later Marshal — Hovhannes Bagramyan, the highest-ranking Armenian officer in the Red Army at the time. The heroes of the Second World War remain dear to the hearts of Armenians. They saved the country and the peace.

In conclusion, it is critical to preserve and respect the memory of the victims of one of the darkest pages of our common history. In its preamble, the Charter of the United Nations states that we, the peoples of the United Nations, are determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.

We must overcome the legacy of war, genocide and other crimes against humanity and build on the basis of cooperation and understanding in promoting democratic values and respecting fundamental freedoms. We urge the Members of the United Nations to recommit themselves to studying the lessons of the past and to adhere to the peaceful settlement of conflicts and disputes around the world. That commitment is the best way to pay tribute to those who hve fought for liberty and freedom.

Mr. Braun (Germany): As we have heard repeatedly today, when the weapons fell silent in Europe in May 1945 — 70 years ago — the world lay in ruins. Europe was devastated. An entire continent was trapped between defeat and recommencement, victory and displacement, joy and desperation, independence and captivity, reconstruction and infinite exhaustion. A war unleashed by Nazi Germany had brought unspeakable suffering upon its neighbours and, as a consequence, also upon its own citizens. The name of my country will be linked to that human tragedy forever.

The United Nations was founded, 70 years ago, as a consequence of the Second World War. And it is in the halls of the United Nations that we Germans today are humbly bowing our heads to pay tribute to the millions of victims of the Second World War — men, women and children, soldiers and civilians alike, citizens of nearly all of the nations assembled here today — who lost their lives, their loved ones and their livelihoods in a senseless war. Germany is asking the nations for forgiveness, since we cannot forgive ourselves.

The crimes of the National Socialist regime are without parallel. To this day, they make us shudder: the murder of millions of Europe's Jews; the unspeakable crime that was the Shoah; the murder and persecution of Sinti and Roma, of homosexuals, of persons with disabilities, of political activists, of individuals who thought differently, looked differently, prayed differently or acted differently than what the National Socialists dictated. Germany has accepted its responsibility for those crimes, a responsibility that we will always honour.

"Memory has no expiration date, and you cannot decree that it has been dealt with or brought to a conclusion", said Noach Flug, who survived the death march from Auschwitz. This thought should always guide us, in Germany and elsewhere. It is our responsibility to keep the memory alive, as the number of survivors and witnesses is diminishing. We are thankful to the nations that liberated Germany from the inhumane National Socialist regime 70 years ago. I mention this because when the late German President Richard von Weizscker spoke of that liberation 30 years ago, he opened a new chapter for us Germans to come to terms with our past: not by suppressing the shameful memory, but by actively embracing our history. Only in that way could we build a new identity.

The year 1945 not only marks the end of the Second World War; it also commemorates the endeavour of visionary leaders to build a more peaceful and prosperous global order, to free humankind from the scourge of war and to replace the law of force with the force of law. To this day, the United Nations is the cornerstone of that vision. In that sense, 1945 also marked a new beginning. Who would have believed in May 1945 that France, Germany's archenemy for decades, would become our closest ally and friend? Who would have thought that Europe — the battlefield of the twentieth century — would overcome its divisions and develop into a prosperous and peaceful community, a promoter of global peace and security? Who would have thought that only 20 years after the Holocaust, Israel would reach out to Germany, the country of the perpetrators, to establish diplomatic relations? This year we are able to celebrate 50 years of

these diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel. Who would have thought that in 1973, two German States would be allowed to join the United Nations, to embrace, protect and promote the core principles enshrined in its Charter, values and principles that Nazi Germany abused so singularly? And who would have thought that Germany's reunification in 1990 would be supported by its former enemies?

While Europe and the world remained divided for decades after 1945, Germany was granted the opportunity to return to the international community to live in peace and friendship with its neighbours. The hand that those neighbours extended to us in peace laid the foundation for reconciliation and for ever-closer European integration. To this day, we are humbled and grateful for the forgiveness that we received.

Gratitude, however, is not enough. Reconciliation also entails a responsibility — a responsibility to strengthen and to defend international order in order to maintain international peace and security; a responsibility to stand in solidarity with those who are oppressed or persecuted; a responsibility to help overcome conflicts and divisions by peaceful means. Our post-War history has shown us that in our globalized world one can only gain by also giving. That realization lies at the heart of Germany's commitment to international institutions, European integration and worldwide partnerships. Therefore, when we join others in saying today "Never again!", we also mean "Never again act in isolation." Our "Never again!" will always include a firm commitment to the United Nations that rose from the ashes of the Second World War.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine) (*spoke in French*): It is with great deference that the international community, and especially Ukraine, is commemorating the great victory in the Second World War in these most memorable days. We remember all those who gave their lives for peace and security in Europe and the world over — for a world free of fascism and hate. In these days, our hearts are particularly filled with immense respect and deep gratitude for all those who sacrificed themselves for us, for our lives today and for our future. This is a particularly moving fact that unites all generations and fills us with shared feelings of joy and sadness alike.

We sincerely honour the memory of the liberators who victoriously defended our inalienable right to live freely in the land of our birth, and the memory of those in the anti-Hitler coalition that saved Europe from the bondage of fascism.

In these days of the month of May, all Ukrainian families remember those who did not return from that terrible and infernal War. Seventy years have passed since the day when the Ukrainian people — together with others — secured heroic victory in the Second World War. We continue every year, as we always shall, to remember the lessons of that tragic history, as we honour from the bottom of our hearts the memory of all those lost, and congratulate and thank those who preserve the memory of these tragic events.

Ukraine is and will forever remain extremely grateful to those who will remain forever young on the battlefields of the Second World War. My country paid an incredibly horrible price for the abolition of fascist dictatorship in Europe. Approximately 7 million Ukrainians participated in the hostilities on the various fronts of the Second World War, including 2,069 who were honoured during the War with the title of Hero of the Soviet Union — the highest Soviet distinction at the time. Among the 104 people twice named Hero of the Soviet Union, 29 were Ukrainians, or one in three. Among the three people on whom this highest distinction was conferred three times was our compatriot the legendary pilot Ivan Kozhedoub.

Honouring the memory of those who were lost is a great and sacred act because we realize that, without this great victory and the contribution of Ukraine to this very important achievement, there would be no free Europe.

The road to victory was hard and bloody. It was at the price of immense efforts that we were able to achieve it. According to war historians, Ukraine gave more than 8 million lives for the freedom of Europe. Let me underscore that, 8 million lives. The Soviet army lost nearly 3.5 million citizens of Ukraine. That is the catastrophic price that my country paid for the right to build our future free of the atrocities of fascism. More than 2 million Ukrainians were sent into forced labour in Germany — young people, adolescents and women. It was with the blood, sweat and tears of millions of our lost countrymen that Ukraine, like the whole of Europe, freed itself from fascism.

(*spoke in English*)

The great victory holiday is not only an opportunity to pay tribute to the fallen and to war veterans; it is

also an occasion to reflect on the lessons of the past, lessons that unfortunately have not all been learned. The spiritual emptiness, the loss of faith in the absolute value of human life and the individual ambitions of authoritarian leaders become the basis for political extremism, exporting new forms of artificial local conflicts, ethnic intolerance and radicalism. The loss of faith in the future, in civil solidarity and in love of one's neighbours, and morbid, selfish ambitions allow dictators and leaders to throw entire nations into a whirlpool of suffering.

Ukraine has travelled a long hard road. A year ago, we could confidently say that we had kept Ukraine united and diverse, a country that had restored its statehood and laid the foundation for its future among the developed European nations. However, unfortunately, some countries still cannot accept the fact that the past will remain forever in the past, that colonial empires went into the oblivion of history, that greatness is not built on armies of millions and on nuclear weapons but on stability, inspiring work and the prosperity of its citizens.

Seventy years on from the Second World War, Ukraine smells the odor of war again, sees its red color and hears the voice of those suffering from a conflict brought to us from the outside, but this time not from the West. It is now most tragic and incomprehensible to us that those with whom we fought together, side by side, against fascism, those whom we considered allies and friends, are today bringing chaos and death into our homes, and arming and financing bandits who cultivate terror in an area that was peaceful a year ago.

Those together with whom our grandfathers shed their blood in the battlefields against fascism in the last century are today in fact discrediting their blessed memory, stealing our internationally recognized territory, savagely ignoring the Charter of the United Nations, signed jointly 70 years ago, and repeating, step by step, the fatal errors that led to the outbreak of the Second World War, in 1939.

Ukraine is a European State that not only seeks to strengthen peace and security but also, as shown by its own historical examples, is committed to contributing to a world without war, human suffering and death. Today we call, from the rostrum of the United Nations on this memorable day, on those who, for their own geopolitical ambitions want to pollute the memory of millions who died in the Second World War, to come to their senses. Ukraine also appeals to the world not to turn a blind eye to attempts by some authoritarian leaders to ignite and sustain new seats of instability and bring all of us to the abyss of further world war, which may very well be the last.

Wars and civil conflicts destroy society and jeopardize the fate of millions of people. Let us care for the world, remember the past and work together to build our a better common future.

Mr. Bishnoi (India): The Second World War was the most devastating and destructive global conflict in human history. The world witnessed horrific bloodshed and violence, which led to the mass deaths of millions of civilians and soldiers. We need to remember the victims. We also need to pay tribute to the millions of soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice so that future generations might live in a safer world.

We are grateful to the President of the General Assembly for having convened this meeting to commemorate all of the victims of the War. We also thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for having piloted the resolution calling for this meeting. We salute the valiant young women and men and the people of all the countries who fought to ensure that we may live in a world free of fascism.

It is important to take note of and to remember the huge contributions and sacrifices made by people from all parts of the world.

The Indian Army suffered nearly 87,000 fatalities and more than 100,000 injured during the Second World War. At the start of Second World War, the Indian Army was a mere 200,000 men. That number swelled to 2.5 million men, the largest volunteer force ever raised in history. It participated in some of the most crucial battle fronts.

For millennia in India, it has been the philosophy of upholding the values of good over evil that has guided the code of the warrior. It is from that perspective that Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence, supported Indian participation in the two World Wars despite our then-ongoing struggle against colonial rule. Our participation contributed immensely to Allied efforts during the War.

I would particularly like to underline the sacrifices of brave Indian women, many of whom served as nurses in civil and military hospitals or as members of the Women's Auxiliary Corps, performing vital tasks for the war effort just behind the front lines. They drove

army vehicles, operated switchboards and worked as mechanics. During the evacuation of Myanmar, then called Burma, Indian women often stayed at their posts and continued to send vital messages over the telegraph lines, in order to help as many civilians as possible escape. Many died and many were captured, to endure terrible hardship and deprivation in prisoner-of-war camps.

As we mark the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, it is also an occasion to consider the lessons of the past and ways to meet the challenges of the future.

Despite the progress humankind has recorded, war is far from having been eliminated. While instances of war and armed conflict may have decreased over time, the actual impact on people has expanded. Estimates suggest that mortality caused by conflict has increased dramatically, from 1.6 million in the sixteenth century to nearly 110 million in the twentieth.

Today terrorism has emerged as one of the greatest threats to humankind. It threatens to expand its reach and engulf the world in carnage similar to that witnessed during the two World Wars. Terrorism is a global phenomenon and can be defeated only by global action. We need to ensure that we are not found wanting in our efforts.

As we commemorate the end of the Second World War, we also need to take stock of the health of the institutions of global governance that were established in its wake. President Museveni of Uganda, speaking at the United Nations yesterday, noted that most of the fundamental structures created after the Second World War by the victorious Powers remain unchanged. He pointed out that when the United Nations was created, there were only two sovereign countries in Africa. This meeting therefore also presents a useful opportunity to underline the need to address what President Museveni referred to as "the structural deficiency in the architecture of global security".

India participated in the San Francisco Conference and, as a founding Member of the United Nations, remains fully committed to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. It is our hope that the Organization will take concrete steps, as it celebrates its seventieth anniversary, to be fit for purpose and reflective of contemporary realities.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for having convened this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly.

Since this year marks the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, which resulted in great sacrifices by mankind, I would like to pay most sincere tribute to all the victims who died as a result of the War.

As the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations stipulates, the United Nations was created 70 years ago in order "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind", and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and human dignity. It was also created in order "to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained".

Throughout these 70 years, Japan has walked the path of a peace-loving nation while consistently respecting freedom, democracy, fundamental human rights and the rule of law, based on feelings of deep remorse over the war. Our actions brought suffering to the peoples in Asian countries. We must not avert our eyes from that fact.

Japan has also made assiduous efforts to contribute to world peace and prosperity through our efforts in areas such as the maintenance of peace and security, development and humanitarian assistance, the protection and promotion of human rights, as well as disarmament and non-proliferation. My delegation is making constructive contributions at the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which has been taking place since last week here at the United Nations.

Japan attaches particular importance to the principle stipulated in the Charter that international disputes shall be settled by peaceful means based on international law, and not by force or coercion. We have been making great efforts to fully comply with international law, and we are proud of our record. Japan is committed to continuing our efforts to establish and universalize the rule of law.

Japan expresses its highest appreciation for the work of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security in the international community. At the same time, when we look at the world's current situation, 70 years after the Second World War, people are still

suffering from conflicts, poverty and human rights violations. Conflicts are not only among States but also among ethnicities and religions. Moreover, the world is facing unprecedented crises posed by the spread of extremism and terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This reminds us that there is an even greater need to be united in order to tackle the threats common to us all.

In view of these circumstances and as we head towards the future, the United Nations must continue to play a central role in the maintenance of international peace and security and in respecting and promoting human rights and freedom.

Freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law now constitute an inherent part of the identity of the Japanese people. The path we have taken so far as a peace-loving nation is the pride of the Japanese people and will never change, even as international circumstances change drastically.

I would like to end my statement by reaffirming Japan's determination to make further positive contributions, under the policy of a proactive contribution to peace, based on the principle of international cooperation, in areas such as peacebuilding, the fight against terrorism, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, human security, education, health, development, global warming and women's empowerment. We will make those contributions together with the United Nations.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): The event to which today's meeting of the General Assembly is devoted is of truly historic significance. With losses on an unprecedented scale, the Second World War compelled all of civilized humankind to unite in a struggle against the mortal danger of the Nazi enslavement, putting aside all disputes and differences of opinion. The victory in that War was a shared victory that gave powerful impetus to the unification of the international community, the result of which was the creation of the United Nations Organization. Having paid a price of terrible suffering and the deaths of millions, the peoples of the world came to the realization that there was no alternative to the system of collective security enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Today, 70 years later, we must not forget that any attempts to infringe on the democratic rights of citizens as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights lead directly to tyranny, and from there it is only a step to the crimes that we recall today with horror and loathing. We reject all attempts to glorify fascism or rewrite history. It would be insane to allow ourselves to forget the terrible lessons of the Nazis' aggression and atrocities. We must always remember those who died, and join in the efforts of the international community to fight against new threats and challenges, recognizing and respecting the central role of the United Nations in that fight.

At a time when we are preparing to celebrate the anniversary of the victory over Nazism, we come back again and again to the pages of history that describe the most terrible and bloody war that our peoples have ever endured. The people of a great country had to save their homeland, their homes, their children. We were united in our desire, and we were victorious. We paid a very high price for that great victory: 20 million dead, including children. They did not all fall in battle; some died of hunger, of illness or in concentration camps. Millions of orphans, 19-year-old widows, invalids, ruined cities and broken lives were all that remained when the War was over. Together with representatives of other nationalities, the citizens of Turkmenistan fought courageously against fascism. Many of them took part in battles all over Europe, liberating city after city, country after country, and ending that long, arduous march at the walls of the Reichstag. Hundreds of thousands of them were left to lie for eternity in foreign soil, paying with their own lives to preserve peace for all. Their souls will live in our memory, and their deeds will never die.

It would be impossible to name in this meeting the thousands of brave soldiers who fought, whether or not they received medals and decorations. The same goes for the women and children who worked in factories and on farms to help those at the front. During the War the people of the Republic of Turkmenia gave seven and a half tons of silver and gold ornaments to help the war effort and sent millions of parcels of warm clothing as gifts to the soldiers and officers of the Red Army, making sacrifices in order to help build planes, tanks and other armaments. We pay tribute to all the peoples of the Soviet Union, who did everything possible to help defeat fascism. We pay tribute to our allies who fought against fascism and helped to achieve our shared victory.

Today's meeting is one of the most important events commemorating the seventieth anniversary of our great victory over fascism, to which my country made a significant contribution. On 22 November

2004, the General Assembly adopted resolution 59/26, which declares 8 and 9 May a time of remembrance and reconciliation, and proposing that those two days be observed annually in tribute to all victims of the Second World War. The historical significance of the victory in the Second World War is inseparable from the vital mission that the United Nations has fulfilled for the past 70 years. The very creation of this universal Organization was first and foremost the result of the Allied coalition and would have been unthinkable without that coalition's defeat of fascism. The United Nations was created for peace and peaceful development.

The historic date that this special meeting of the General Assembly commemorates is a tribute to the millions of victims of the Nazi regime that must never be forgotten, neither here nor anywhere else in the world. We remember all who paid for that victory with their lives. May their memory be eternal. We bow down to all who participated in the second and, we hope, the last world war, whose lessons oblige us to cherish peace, fight every kind of neo-Nazism, chauvinism, xenophobia and other manifestations that seek to destroy human honour, dignity and rights. Today we planted a tree of peace in a ceremony that has a deep philosophical meaning. Our duty, and the duty of the peoples of all the countries of the United Nations, is to grow peace, to help it take root in every country, not to allow new violence and new victims, to agree and to settle disputes peacefully. We hope that we have been heard, seen and understood by millions of people all over the world. We are mothers raising children for life, for building a new and glorious world, and we do not want our children to die on battlegrounds. We must have no more wars. I wish all those here a very happy Day of Victory.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba welcomes the commemoration of the victory over fascism and the end of the Second World War. We see that act of justice as giving us a day for reflection. Seventy years ago, humankind vanquished barbarism. The victory over fascism involved the sacrifice of the lives of millions of human beings.

Fascism is the most complete expression of reactionary bourgeois and imperialist thinking. That political phenomenon extracted a very high price from humankind. While at the time a number of countries were also assaulted by fascism and contributed to the successful outcome of the War, none made a greater contribution to the victory over fascism's attempt to achieve world domination than the peoples of the Soviet Union. Over four years of war, several of its major cities were besieged and destroyed. More than 20 million Soviet citizens lost their lives. Communists, Jews, Roma, the disabled and homosexuals — all were persecuted with the aim of extermination. We are eternally grateful to the countries and people who resisted, fought and defeated fascism.

At the end of the Second World War, the nations then free of colonialism and foreign domination formed the United Nations. In its founding Charter, the Organization set down commitments to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, achieving international cooperation in solving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems and ensuring respect for human rights without discrimination. Respect for sovereignty and equality among States, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the rejection of the use of force remain irreplaceable pillars of the international system.

However, the victory over fascism did not mean we had found a panacea for all. Many peoples had to wait years to achieve their independence and join the United Nations. The multipolarity that characterized the world for decades in the second half of the twentieth century allowed momentous achievements for developing countries, such as the adoption of declarations of peoples' right to self-determination, peace and development and the proclamation of such objectives as establishing a new international economic order and a new world order of information and communication.

Today, the United Nations faces colossal challenges and threats. Imperialist interventions against the sovereignty of States, the acceleration of climate change, underdevelopment and poverty, hunger and illiteracy, plundering wars for hegemonic domination, the challenge to the diversity and self-determination of peoples, and an unjust and unequal economic, commercial and financial international order that has been imposed on us are just some of the serious challenges we face. However, there is no greater danger to the human race than the existence of more than 16,000 nuclear weapons, 4,000 of which are ready for immediate use. No country or individual can feel safe on our planet until each and every one of these weapons is prohibited and consequently destroyed.

The United Nations has a sacred duty to reflect on the terrible lessons learned from the Second World War. We are called to work tirelessly to keep alive in the memory of present and future generations the consequences of intolerance, hegemonic projects and imperial greed. The victory over fascism confirmed the value of international solidarity and cooperation of all nations and all people who love freedom, peace and justice. We wish eternal glory to the heroes and martyrs of the struggle against fascism and militarism.

Mrs. Boura (Greece) (*spoke in French*): Greece aligns itself with the statement made by the Head of the Delegation of the European Union.

As the representative of Greece, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this solemn meeting of the Assembly to mark the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, which was one of the bloodiest and destructive wars in modern human history.

(*spoke in English*)

The people of Greece — a country among those most severely afflicted by that War — remember with pride the role of their forefathers in the historic victory against inhumanity and tyranny. We are therefore proud to join other nations in paying tribute to the millions of men and women who fought and to all those who lost their lives defending freedom and universal values. In this context, we do not forget the tragedy and the victims of the Holocaust.

In 1940, Greece secured the first victory against fascism. In 1944, it was left a ruined country, a country in rubble and poverty, a State that had lost 10 per cent of its population. It lost 86 per cent of its Jewish communities. An estimated 250,000 people died of famine. Some 18 per cent of its population was left homeless. The country lost a third of its villages, half of its agricultural production and 40 per cent of its livestock, as well as a major part of its infrastructure and merchant marine. It was the vision of a better world that made us join in 1945 the 50 nations that established the United Nations, resolved to create a world where peace and reconciliation would prevail.

Just a few years after its end, the devastating World War brought about the biggest peace project in history, the creation of the former European communities, bringing former foes together in a single European family that Greece joined in the early 1980s. It is not by chance that in 2012 the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its role in the advancement of peace and reconciliation, human rights and democracy in Europe.

The year 2015 marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, as it was in 1945 that 51 States came together to endorse the United Nations Charter, vowing not to let this dark chapter of war repeat itself. However, we still live in an imperfect world — a world plagued by wars and conflicts, inequality and poverty, climate change and pandemic disease, destruction and terrorism. The challenges that we now face are different from those of 70 years ago. Many of them are on a global scale and can be successfully tackled only if we work closely, hand in hand, with perseverance and resolve. The lessons learned from the immense suffering, carnage and destruction caused by war should strengthen our commitment and efforts to ensure peace and security, support justice and human rights and promote progress and development.

Today, our much larger family of 193 countries should remain committed to carrying on the legacy of the past generations who fought valiantly and died for the freedom of many among us.

Mr. Mminele (South Africa): It is with great respect that I wish to pay sincere tribute and express my country's condolences to all the victims who perished as a result of the Second World War. This period was marred by continuous incidents of man's inhumanity to man. Millions of men, women and children died throughout the world due to the intolerance displayed by undemocratic and warmongering regimes, whose only concern was domination, expansion and the enslavement of entire countries and regions.

The lack of tolerance was made manifest in many malicious forms, be it an absence of political, ideological, racial, cultural or religious tolerance, or the growth of unchecked nationalism and imperialism that ultimately allowed unjust regimes to take action against the innocent and the defenceless. This was what allowed the Second World War to commence and ultimately claim millions of lives throughout the world, including on the continent of Africa.

Having been built from the ashes of this devastating War, the United Nations must continue to strive for the objective of preserving international peace and security. In its preamble, the Charter speaks of

> "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind ...".

We continue to remain conscious of the fact, however, that it is not just the two World Wars that have brought untold sorrow to humankind. We are also aware that our efforts for peace have failed too often. South Africa reiterates its undertaking to work with all the Members of the United Nations to eliminate the scourge of war as witnessed just 70 years ago. We remain committed to creating a more peaceful, just and prosperous world for future generations.

At the same time, we are regretfully aware of the many crises that remain unresolved. Therefore, this commemoration must sharpen our resolve and commitment to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or sovereignty of States. Also, it should lead us to redouble our efforts to settle disputes by peaceful means. We need to overcome the legacies of the War and build on the progress we have made since the end of the Second World War in promoting democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms. When it comes to commemoration, we should pay tribute to the victims of the Second World War. Their dreams of peace should inspire us to redouble our efforts in working for international peace and security.

As the world converges later in September to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, it will be crucial for all of us to stop and reflect on how far we have come. Let us use that moment to remember these fallen heroes and heroines. We should never lose sight of their sacrifices, which allowed for the entrenchment of the very principles and values which we hold dear and have defined the very foundations of the United Nations.

Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): We commend the Russian Federation for proposing this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly on the seventieth anniversary of victory in the Second World War. The heroic role played by the Russian people alongside many others in vanquishing fascism will never be forgotten. Today is a day of reverence and remembrance. Today, we honour the innumerable men and women across the globe who sacrificed their lives to defend liberty, eradicate intolerance and uphold justice. We also pay homage to the tens of millions of innocent civilians who perished in the largest conflict ever fought.

Let us not forget those war victims who were subject to horrific policies of extermination and genocide. Today, we renew our joint commitment never to allow those torments to ravage humanity again. Brazil is proud of its national contribution to the cause of the Allies during the conflict and in peacetime. Having declared war on the Axis and supplied key air and naval bases to Allied forces as of 1942, Brazil later dispatched its first fighter squadron and an expeditionary force of over 25,000 troops to Europe, having also joined in the anti-submarine combats in the Atlantic.

By fighting bravely in Monte Castello, Montese, Fornovo di Taro and other battles, our soldiers contributed to liberating Italy and to the overall victory over fascism. The Brazilian Government also took part in regional and global meetings that designed a new international order aimed at ensuring peace and cooperation, culminating in the San Francisco Conference, when my country became a founding Member of the Organization. One of the core purposes of the United Nations is to maintain peace and security through collective measures. The Charter also establishes that peaceful means shall be used to settle international disputes. These objectives remain as valid and vital today as they were seven decades ago.

Yet the world has undergone complex and profound changes since 1945. New challenges that could not have been anticipated by our forefathers in San Francisco have emerged and now threaten to render dysfunctional our multilateral system. In order to renew our commitment to the principles and purposes of the Organization, we should be as ambitious as the statesmen who once conceived of a new global order based on universal values.

At the heart of this endeavour is the imperative to update our framework for the maintenance of international peace and security. Let us seize the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations as an opportunity to achieve a concrete outcome on this decisive matter. Reforming the Security Council so that it is fit for the new challenges we confront would be the ultimate tribute paid by our generation to the millions of victims of the Second World War whose memory we cherish and honour today.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Today, the United Nations and its Member

States stand at a historic moment of looking at past, present and future. Seventy years ago, the heroic army and people of the Soviet Union defeated fascism and militarism, which had driven humankind into enormous suffering and death and made a great contribution to ending the Second World War. We highly appreciate the Russian Federation for having played a leading role in safeguarding world peace and security.

The nations and peoples of the world were firmly united by a strong determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of world wars, which twice imposed untold sorrow on humankind, and waged a hard struggle to achieve durable peace and security. Thanks to the persevering efforts of the peace-loving and progressive countries and peoples of the world after the end of the Second World War, much has been achieved in the struggle to safeguard world peace and security.

However, moves of domination, subjugation and interference designed to infringe upon the sovereignty and block the independent development of other countries and nations have been continuing non-stop, and world peace and security are still faced with lots of challenges. The Government and people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had to devote everything to ensuring peace and security on the Korean peninsula in light of the circumstances whereby the country and the nation are artificially divided, though liberated from the occupation by Japanese militarism and faced with constant aggression attempts and sanctions by outside forces. Today, the Korean peninsula remains one of the most dangerous hotspots, and ever-growing tensions in and around the peninsula have become a source of great concern around the world.

Extreme circumstances that do not leave any room for judgement as to when a war might break out continue to exist on the Korean peninsula due to the pursuit by the United States of a hostile policy and confrontational moves against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States resorts to nuclear war exercises for a surprise attack on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by mobilizing tens of thousands of military forces and nuclear attack equipment every year, as has already been the case two times this year.

Through its threats of military aggression and political and economic pressure against my country, the United States pursues the clear goals of disturbing our peaceful development and destroying the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and furthermore, of laying a springboard for achieving its strategy of world domination. Its Asian strategy is speedily carried out in the forms of, inter alia, introducing missile defence systems, trying to build a tripartite military alliance involving Japan and South Korea and increasing war exercises to intentionally create tensions on the Korean peninsula.

As we have stated several times, the nuclear threat posed by the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not potential or abstract, but practical and physical. Strategic nuclear bombers fly non-stop from the mainland or Guam to the Korean peninsula and stage drills simulating the dropping of nuclear bombs several times every year. Aircraft carriers and submarines loaded with nuclear missiles continually enter the waters around and in the Korean peninsula to take part in nuclear war exercises aimed at occupying Pyongyang.

The nuclear threat and blackmail and the hostile policy of the most powerful nuclear-weapon State for over half a century pushed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to acquire nuclear weapons. The ever-increasing nuclear threat leaves us with no other choice but to bolster our nuclear deterrent capabilities to cope with it. The fact that we are able to prevent war and defend peace on the Korean peninsula, where the interests of big Powers are intricately interwoven and war posturing runs high, is entirely attributable to our deterrent capabilities, including the nuclear forces built up by the Songun policy.

The scourge left by the Second World War in Asia remains present 70 years after the War. Japan, an enemy State and a defeated State that occupied Asian countries during the War and committed unimaginable crimes against humanity, has not yet acknowledged, issued an apology or made reparations for its crimes in a clearly convincing manner. The recent behaviour of the Japanese authorities evoke the serious concern of the international society. The fact that Japan is too ambitious and hot-tempered in its approach in the reform of the Security Council and also too fussy about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's human rights issue on the international arena is based on its sinister and impudent goal to bury its past crimes and eliminate the stigma of being an enemy State by all possible means. It is a challenge to history itself and to the United Nations; an act of twisting the knife in

the wounds of the victims of the massacre and forced labour and of the sex slaves killed by the Japanese army officers without even acknowledging their cruelty.

This year, which marks the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the defeat of Japan and the founding of the United Nations, Japan must make a political decision to separate itself from its past forever. Separating itself from its past should include totally extinguishing the ambition to revive the militarism that remains alive in the minds of the Japanese. That can no longer be left for future generations. We cannot equivocate about the past crimes of Japan, nor can those crimes be diluted or forgotten because of the passage of time. Japan's criminal history can never be covered up or erased.

In this solemn forum in which we are commemorating the victims of the Second World War, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea strongly urges Japan, in the name of all the victims of the massacres, the forced labour and the sex slaves killed by the Japanese army, to fully and clearly acknowledge, apologize for and make reparations for its crimes this year, which marks the seventieth anniversary of Japan's defeat.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this special meeting to commemorate all the victims of the Second World War 70 years after the War ended on the European continent. I also thank the Russian Federation for having taken the initiative to organize this commemorative meeting.

In 1945, the European continent was in ruins. Six years of war, destruction, killings, forced displacement and genocide had caused the loss of almost 20 million civilian lives on the European continent alone. That is more than the number of soldiers killed. This War against civilians culminated in the absolute horror of the Holocaust, the Nazi extermination directed against the Jews of Europe. We have gathered here today, first and foremost, to fulfil our eternal duty to remember all the victims of the War and its cruelty.

Our Organization, the United Nations, was born not only from the ruins of the Second World War, but also from the lessons of the failure of the collective security system of the period between the two Wars, and above all the failure of the League of Nations. The failures of the United Nations predecessor afford us at least four lessons.

First, it is not enough to address conflict from a strictly security standpoint. We must take into account the need to respect the dignity and worth of human beings, fundamental human rights and the development and assistance of populations. We know today that those factors play an essential role in addressing the root causes of conflict. In 1943, the Allied forces set up the United Nations Administration for Reconstruction and Relief, which assisted 30 million displaced persons in Europe and Asia. UNESCO, the International Labour Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations were established or at least conceived before the victory. Now, 70 years later, the United Nations has powerful levers to help the poor and marginalized, who constitute a breeding ground for all conflicts. These lessons must guide our work in defining the new post-2015 development agenda, which will have to meet the challenges faced by the developing world today.

The second lesson to be drawn is that our ability to act is linked to the legitimacy of our institutions. It bears repeating that 70 years after the establishment of the United Nations, our world is very different from the world of 1945. Therefore, the United Nations must adapt and reform to reflect the world we live in today. The reform of the Security Council in this regard is urgent and vital. France supports the enlargement of the Council in both categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent, and supports Germany and Japan, which deserve to be mentioned today, as well as India, Brazil and an African representation.

Legitimacy and credibility are key. That is the third lesson. What credibility does the Security Council have if it remains powerless in the face of the mass crimes being committed for four years in Syria? How can sovereignty be used as justification for inaction in the face of a conflict that has already resulted in the deaths of more than 200,000? On 26 June 1945, States Members of the United Nations met in San Francisco, signed the Charter and laid out in its preamble the powerful words that resonate still today:

> "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ... and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person ..."

That defense of fundamental human rights is the reason for being for our Organization.

Those rights are solemnly laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was drafted by the French jurist René Cassin, together with nine counterparts from around the world. The Declaration reaffirms the intangibility and universality of human rights. It was in that context that France formulated its initiative proposing that the permanent members of the Security Council abstain voluntarily and collectively from having recourse to the veto in situations of mass crimes, crimes whose extent and gravity in Syria represent an insult to the victims of the Second World War, which we are commemorating today. We hope that the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations will enable us to make progress with that initiative.

Lastly, I would like to mention one final lesson that France holds very dear, which is that there can be no peace without justice. The fight against impunity for the most serious crimes, whether in Nuremberg in the past or today in The Hague, must remain at the core of our efforts to create a lasting peace and avoid a return to war. That demand for justice clearly applies to Syria, where those responsible for large-scale crimes should be prosecuted in the International Criminal Court.

I would like to end on a note of hope. Between 1870 and 1945, France and Germany confronted each other in three major wars, including two World Wars. Since then, the tireless efforts of leaders on both sides of the Rhine have outlined a path of true reconciliation. That Franco-German reconciliation has enabled the creation of the European Union, a historically unique experiment in integrating and building an area of peace, prosperity and democracy. Hereditary conflicts and predestined history do not exist. France and Germany's reconciliation and the building of the European Union are important lessons for our time and a powerful message of hope for the community of nations.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this solemn meeting to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and to pay tribute to all the victims of that tragic chapter in human history. We are honoured by the presence of a group of veterans of the War at this meeting and would like to thank them and all who fought against Nazism and fascism for their valour and sacrifice. Seventy years after the end of the Second World War, we should honour and remember the millions of human beings, dead, missing, wounded, displaced or tortured by the horrors of the War, the worst conflict the world has ever seen, in which men fought for their survival and for the right to life of future generations, against Nazism and fascism. We hope that it will be the last such war and that there will be no more wars between peoples.

As the Second World War ended, the United Nations arose, along with the commitment, enshrined in its Charter, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to take effective measures to promote peace and security, social development and human rights in a comprehensive and inclusive manner. From then on, war as a means of enforcement or settlement of differences was legally proscribed. Only full compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations can enable us to ensure peace and security around the world.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a land of peace. Two hundred years ago, our liberators drew their swords for the rights of our people and for the independence of six South American nations. We have never attacked another country. We practice tolerance, dialogue and inclusion in our commitment to peace, justice and understanding among nations. Seventy years after the end of the Second World War, however, we note with deep sorrow and concern the resurgence in vast areas of our planet of intolerant and aggressive ideologies, of fascism, extremism and hatred driven by religious, ethnic, political, national and historical motives. Such ideologies seek to inflame and justify war in order to support and impose a hegemonic global economic system that is unfair, predatory and unsustainable.

We regret that, sadly, these 70 years are still producing bloody, infamous wars that bring a heavy burden of tragedy to our human condition, as they have always done. The millions of men and women who have suffered and continue to suffer from the horrors of war are a challenge to the conscience of humankind. We therefore ask ourselves what ideology, what reasons, what perverse geopolitical and economic interests can sustain or justify the existence of vast military complexes with so many weapons, so much technology, so many resources and means ready to wipe human beings off the face of the earth?

A few days ago, we paid tribute to the victims of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which vaporized thousands of people in seconds and resulted in more than a quarter of a million victims within days, along with their terrible consequences over time. Today

we once again advocate for disarmament and reject the nuclear proliferation that on that infamous occasion made the world aware of the horror of nuclear war.

We have a moral and political responsibility to ensure that the grave harm done by the ideologies of death, fascism, hatred, violence and military and totalitarian logic cannot rise again today in forms that are more modern, sophisticated and dangerous, and far more effective in their dissemination and their criminal activities. The war that is raging in major regions of the world, the use of colonialism, interventionism and the promotion and financing of extremism and terrorism as tools to destabilize countries and wreak havoc for economic and geopolitical purposes — these things are living proof that we still have much to do at the international level to overcome such problems and achieve sustainable peace.

This is a clear and vivid reminder of a legal obligation we cannot ignore. We must work to ensure political independence, territorial integrity, the self-determination of peoples, sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs, which are fundamental to the maintenance of global peace and security and to the promotion of social development and the fight against poverty as political banners that unite us, and to ensure that the Second World War will remain only a terrible memory that humankind will never repeat.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

United Nations A/69/PV.88

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

88th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 5 May 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Gunnarsson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 129 (*continued*)

Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War

Special solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I want to thank you, Mr. President, and through you, the President of the General Assembly, for convening this solemn meeting to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, upon the suggestion of the Russian Federation and with the unanimous support of the General Assembly.

This commemorative meeting requires us to collectively reflect, as Primo Levi would put it, on the human being's amazing ability to be inhumane to his or her fellow human being. Therefore, this solemn meeting must be understood not as a break with the past but as a commitment to the future. Cultivating collective memory leads us to remember the inconceivable dimensions of the greatest tragedy in modern history.

With more than 60 million deaths, tens of millions of people injured, entire cities destroyed, countries mired in misery, desolation and tragic devastation, the Holocaust is the relentless legacy of the Second World War. Upon these deaths and this destruction, our Organization was founded, as the Charter says in its preamble, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

It is therefore necessary once more to honour the memory of the victims of the War — men, women, children — and to honour those who fought for peace, without forgetting that more than half of those killed were innocent civilians. Also, from the perspective of preventive memory and emancipatory historicity, we must today condemn not only the totalitarian ideologies of the past but also the totalizing narratives of the present that, based on hatred and extreme violence, aim to spread new and old forms of bigotry, racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, as well as the angry, demeaning decision to destroy the Other simply for being the Other.

If the victims are not to have died in vain, we know that remembering, honouring and condemning is not enough. We must renew our commitment to and shared responsibility for ensuring that the ethical assurances and legal political principles enshrined in the Charter are not empty rhetoric. We must solemnly emphasize that we believe that there is no moral, ethical or political justification for war. We must solemnly reiterate our condemnation of threats or the use of force and reject war and violence as means to settle disputes or disagreements. As the philosopher of the modern State said, we must take action in uncertainty and risk. That is precisely the essence of freedom.

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We must take action because we are seeing the resurgence of military resolutions in many cases, as an illusory tool for achieving peace. We must take action because we are seeing acts of religious fanaticism in which extreme violence and acts of terrorism and hate are used to dominate, destroy, subjugate and humiliate. We must take action because we are seeing human beings treated as dispensable, as victims of trafficking and transnational organized crime networks that traffic in human beings, weapons, drugs, natural resources and cultural goods. They traffic in the present, in human dignity and in the future. We must do it because we are seeing human beings fall victim to the exclusion that shuts them out and to increasing inequalities — poverty and hunger. We must do it because we are witnessing a giant global apartheid — the drowning of thousands and thousands of human beings who as migrants want to cross the border from the hell in which they live in order to gain entry to countries that represent a paradise to them, but in which they have no place. We must take action to address the ecological catastrophes, attacks on the environment and a pseudo-culture of pillaging of the planet that seems to know no limits.

We are late. We must take action now. We cannot allow our indolence, scepticism and distrust to continue. This is not the eternal return, the monotonous repetition of history. The future is not the determinism of evil. The creed of our Organization is not that man is a wolf to man. We cannot lose any more time. Following the path of peace and achieving human rights and equality is difficult, but we must do it. The alternative to that path is what we witnessed 70 years ago and we made a promise to never again walk down that road.

We know that we have experienced frustration, but we also know that frustrating experiences can inspire and create new hopes. That is why we endeavour in our Organization to make the true hope of a more just, equal and peaceful world a reality.

Mr. Dehghani (Iran): I thank President Kutesa for organizing this special solemn meeting in commemoration of the victims of the Second World War. We have come together today to pay tribute to the memory of the brave women and men who stood up to the warmongering forces and to those who resorted to aggression and terror to spread their dark and inhumane ideology. They lost their precious lives in defending their countries, as well as their freedom and honour, in the face of an enemy that was out to subjugate peoples in Europe and well beyond to its atrocious and brutal rule. We honour the memory of millions upon millions of soldiers and civilians who perished resisting the Nazi military machine on the front lines, as well as in the war-stricken societies, owing to famine and diseases.

Being a truly global scourge, the Second World War had devastating impacts well beyond the boundaries of the belligerent forces. Victims of this ugly War were not only nationals of the Allies or the Axis Powers. Peoples of many other countries, including Iran, suffered immensely during the War. Today, as we commemorate the victims of the War, the less-known sufferings imposed on countries such as Iran deserve particular attention.

One of the less-recognized tragedies of the Second World War was the invasion and occupation of Iran during the War. This occupation had far-reaching adverse impacts on the political sovereignty and economic development of my country. It claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Iranians — members of the military and civilians alike — on the battlefield and as a result of famine and disease, and heavily damaged Iran's infrastructure.

On 4 September 1939, just three days after the beginning of the War, Iran declared its neutrality. This position was reaffirmed once again five days after the German Army attacked the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Unfortunately, this position was not respected by parties to the War. As the Nazi Army attacked the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Iran and its population became entangled in the geopolitical game of the big Powers with no due regard for the fate of the Iranian people. The so-called Persian Corridor — the Trans-Iranian Railway and road network, which could be used to get supplies to the new war fronts — became an increasingly attractive route for the Allies. Moreover, Iran by that time had already become a major producer of oil that the parties to the great War were keen to exploit and also prevent others from accessing, as it was such a valuable resource.

Following unfounded pretexts and illegal demands, the Allies invaded Iran on 25 August 1941 from the north, south and west and soon occupied the country. They grossly interfered with the political system and forced radical changes at the highest level of the Government. They thereby violated the right of Iran to remain neutral in the War and failed to respect international law in terms of honouring the sovereignty of the country and its right to self-determination. The invaders took over most significant functions of

the country. Important economic activities, such as banking and transportation, fell under their command. Furthermore, the occupying Powers seized food, fuel and other essentials, causing a widespread famine in the country that claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands in the course of a couple of years. Iran was devastated through its use as an instrument for the interests of foreign Powers. For outside Powers, Iran was the bridge of victory, while to the country itself this occupation brought nothing but misery.

As Imam Ali says, taking lessons leads to the right path. And as the Spanish thinker George Santayana said, those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. If we are to prevent catastrophes like the Second World War from recurring, we have to learn from them. The Second World War would not have happened if there had been a commitment on the part of all States to respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of other States, to settling all disputes by peaceful means and to refraining from the threat or the use of force in their international relations.

Iran, as a founding Member of the United Nations and one that has had the bitter experience of being invaded and occupied for several years by outside Powers on many occasions during its near and remote history, places the greatest importance on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We call upon all States to abide by their obligations under the Charter; a measure that enables us to avoid the kind of ordeal many of us experienced during the Second World War.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): Today, on the seventieth anniversary of the end of the most horrific war in human history, we are looking back at what happened during those trying years and on what we have done recently and what we are doing now to make our planet a safer place. The Second World War brought untold sorrow to humankind. Its scope and the loss of human life and property were unprecedented. Today's meeting gives us an opportunity to pay tribute to those who fought for peace, freedom and human dignity, to commemorate the many millions of victims of the Second World War, and to remember its terrifying atrocities and destruction. The war touched all continents and peoples, sparing no one from pain and suffering.

There is not a single family in Azerbaijan that was not affected one way or another by the Second World War. Even though the hostilities took place beyond the territory of Azerbaijan, our people underwent and overcame a severe ordeal and made their contribution to the victory. Our Republic mobilized for the army more than 600,000 of its sons and daughters, half of whom sacrificed their lives. Many Azerbaijanis also fought as members of the resistance in France, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands and Yugoslavia.

The victory was achieved not only on the battlefield but also at home. In a very short time frame, Azerbaijan set up works for the production of ammunition and armaments and hosted industrial enterprises relocated from the war theatre. The true heroism was the selfless service and dedication of the people of Azerbaijan, who worked day and night in oil production. During the Second World War, Baku, one of the major oil producers and suppliers, secured almost 80 per cent of all the oil extracted in the entire Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 90 per cent of its naphtha and 96 per cent of its lubricants. Four out of five Soviet aircrafts, tanks and trucks used in the course of the Second World War ran on fuel produced in the Baku refineries from oil extracted in the Baku oil fields. In his article entitled "Glory to the Azerbaijani nation", dated 28 April 1945, Fyodor Tolbukhin, Marshal of the Soviet Union, wrote:

> "The Red Army owes the Azerbaijani nation and the courageous Baku oilmen for many victories, for on-time delivery of high-quality fuel to attacking units. Soldiers of our front under Stalingrad, in Don and Donbas, on the banks of Dnepr and Dniester, in Belgrade, under Budapest and Vienna remember the Azerbaijani oilmen with gratitude and greet the brave workers of oily Baku."

The lessons of the Second World War have remained relevant for shaping our contemporary world and for the future of international relations. The desire to save humanity from the scourge of war inspired countries to create a mechanism to maintain international peace and security — the United Nations, our Organization. This commemoration must therefore serve as an opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

It is befitting, given the goal of this special solemn meeting, to recall that in its resolution 69/267, entitled "Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War", the General Assembly, inter alia, calls upon the States Members of the United Nations

"to unite their efforts in dealing with challenges and threats to international peace and security, with the United Nations playing a central role, and to make every effort to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations, and to settle all disputes by peaceful means in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations".

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): I thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/69/PV.87), and I would like to add the following in my national capacity.

Today we remember the six long years of the Second World War, which brought unparalleled suffering to the human race. It was humankind's darkest hour; it was also an unforgettable era that brought out the best in us: the courage, heroism, persistence and devotion to stand our ground against all odds and not to allow evil to prevail no matter how high the price. The seventieth anniversary of the victory in the biggest war in history of the world is much more than a historical footnote; it is an opportunity to solemnly remember all those millions of men and women who perished on the battlefield, in concentration camps and dungeons, in their homes, on seas and in the air, or on some still unmarked killing grounds where people were dying even after the armistice had been signed.

Croatia was heavily struck by the Second World War, with horrible human losses. The war was merciless on us. Barely a family went through it unscratched; the wounds were deep and today, after seven decades, can still be sore. The Croatian anti-fascist legacy, gained through the war against overwhelming odds, is proudly inscribed in the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and stands as one of the pillars of the modern Croatian State. By remembering all the victims of the Second World War, their sacrifice and courage, and by remembering the atrocities and monstrosities inflicted upon them, we are preserving a historical legacy that serves as a tribute and as a warning. Some pasts must never be forgotten.

At the same time, our hearts and minds should be focused on the future. The true added value of events like today's commemoration is not to reopen old wounds or old divides, but to enable us to unite in unanimous and resolute determination not to let it happen again. In order to achieve this, we strongly support full respect for international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as the inviolability of internationally recognized borders of sovereign States.

Victory in the Second World War gave us the United Nations. The United Nations is and should remain at the forefront of the fight against totalitarianism, racism, anti-Semitism, all kinds of hatred, intolerance, human rights violations, discrimination and xenophobia, which are unfortunately still rooted in the world we live in. Only through inexhaustible and hard work to improve the present do we rightfully honour the greatest sacrifice of millions who died in the fight to make this world a more tolerant, free and peaceful place for all of humankind.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): The Second World War was indeed the gravest tragedy to occur in past centuries, as it carried away the lives of millions of innocent people. I join other speakers today in mourning all the victims who lost their lives to defeat Nazism.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Head of the Delegation of the European Union (see A/69/PV.87). At the same time, I would to add the following in my national capacity.

Along with other nations, the Georgian people made a tremendous sacrifice. Out of 700,000 Georgians fighting in the Second World War, 350,000 — in other words, 10 per cent of my country's population at that time, or every tenth Georgian — laid down their lives on the battlefield. Immediately after the end of the War, the civilized world translated the lessons they had learned into concrete actions by adopting the Charter of the United Nations, followed shortly thereafter by the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. These instruments were supposed to put an end to chaos and lawlessness, save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reinstate fundamental human rights and establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law could be maintained.

However, as we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and condemn all crimes committed, our festive mood is overshadowed by the unprecedented security challenges we are facing in different parts of the world. The international system

continues to be shaken by continuous violations of fundamental principles of international law, including the use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States Members of the United Nations.

It is particularly disappointing that a founding Member of the United Nations — one that, as a permanent member of the Security Council, is supposed to be a custodian of peace — is in breach of international law and is undermining the very foundations of the United Nations Charter by annexing the territories of its neighbours, occupying 20 per cent of my country, Georgia, and conducting an aggression against sovereign Ukraine.

Hope dies last, as they say, and I do express a hope that the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War will serve as a reminder for the international community to stand firm in favour of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and for peace and stability in the world, and that transgressors will return to the realm of international law.

Mr. Kydyrov (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I express our sincere gratitude for the convening of today's special solemn meeting to commemorate all the victims of the Second World War.

The Kyrgyz Republic signed on as a main sponsor of resolution 69/267, entitled "Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War", in order to pay a deeply felt tribute of respect to all of those who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the victory over Nazism and a bright future for all humankind. For the same reason, the Kyrgyz Republic, in 2004, was among the main sponsors of resolution 59/26, in which the General Assembly declared 8 and 9 May as a time of remembrance and reconciliation.

The Second World War ended 70 years ago. The historic significance of that event cannot be exaggerated. We will never be able to forget the price paid for victory in that bloody and devastating War. We will never be able to forget its victims. We will never cease mourning those who perished in the War and the Holocaust or holding in our hearts those who suffered occupation, repression, hunger and the travails of the post-War years.

The Kyrgyz Republic did everything in its power at the Second World War to cope with the consequences. For us, this war was the Great Patriotic War — a battle for our fatherland, for the people, for freedom. Every sixth inhabitant of Kyrgyzstan was at the front. More than 360,000 of the best sons and daughters of my people fought in battle; more than 100,000 died there. For their courage and heroism, thousands of fighters and commanders were awarded orders, decorations and medals, Some 21 attained the highest national rank of Cavaliers of the Order of Glory. These are not mere figures — they represent human lives, love for the fatherland, heroism and the individual tragedies of thousands of people.

Nor can we fail to note the contribution of those who worked in the shadows. More than a million of my fellow countrymen toiled in the rear, at great personal cost. The men who had gone off to the front were replaced by women, adolescents and old people. They worked in the fields and farms and in factories, thereby doing their own battle against the enemy. Accordingly, two years ago, on 25 April 2013, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, His Excellency Mr. Almazbek Atambaev, signed a decree on the preparation and carrying out of celebrations of the seventieth anniversary of the Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War. As a result of this decree, an organizational committee was set up and an increase in lifelong financial support was given to those who had fought in the War.

The Kyrgyz Republic believes that the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War must be described as a way not only of rethinking the past but also of looking towards the future. Having lived through the most massive of all wars, in which dozens of millions of people perished, the international community decided to create a world organization, the United Nations. The Organization was established, as the Charter states, with in the resolve "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

Therefore, as we look back today in order to honour the memory of those who died and to pay tribute to the heroes, we also need to keep looking forward. Once again, we affirm our dedication to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. This is particularly relevant today, when millions of people throughout the world continue to be subjected to suffering as a result of the evils brought about by armed conflict. In this context, we fully support the appeal set forth in resolution 69/267 for

> "States Members of the United Nations to unite their efforts in dealing with challenges and threats to international peace and security, with the United Nations playing a central role, and to make every effort to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations, and to settle all disputes by peaceful means in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations".

That is the sole way to protect present and future generations from the scourge of new wars, and it is the best thing that we can do to honour the memory of the millions of people who perished during Second World War.

Mr. Milanović (Serbia): Today we commemorate the solemn anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the greatest calamity that ever befell the world. The slaughter and devastation it left in its train were enormous, biblical. From the steppes of Russia and Ukraine to the vast expanses of the Pacific, from the paddies of East Asia to the dunes of North Africa and the beaches of Normandy, from the streets of Warsaw to the squares of Dresden, from the blasts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the gas chambers of Auschwitz, from the woods and ravines of the Balkans to the killing fields of many other lands, distant and close, the Second World War epitomized the will of the freedom-loving world to live free from the scourge of war.

An important contribution to the fight against fascism and for freedom was made by my country. Some 1.7 million citizens of the former Yugoslavia lost their lives. The majority of them were Serbs. Their contribution, both in blood and money, was strategically significant to the overall Allied war effort. There were 25 enemy divisions deployed in the Balkan theatre, which had an impact on the fighting in other parts of the world. The Nazi campaigns in the Balkans delayed their operations on the Eastern Front, which had an enormous influence on the eventual outcome of the War.

Alongside the Allies, my country strove to build a just world and nations that were equal and free. Together we created the United Nations, which continues to play a central role in safeguarding peace and preventing the use of force against any country's territorial integrity and political independence. A commitment to multilateralism is consequently a pillar of Serbia's foreign policy, particularly considering its tumultuous history and the challenges it has confronted along the way. We believe, therefore, that multilateral forums such as the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are the right framework for promoting democracy and stability and achieving sustainable peace.

From its very inception, the goal of the United Nations has been to establish and maintain a stable, collective peace on the basis of agreement founded on a broad consensus among nations. It has built a system of international security based on experience gained and lessons learned. That system is comprehensive and all-inclusive. Within it, foes of yesteryear join hands to promote democracy, equality and development. Wearing blue helmets, they establish peace, saving the most precious commodity, the commodity of human life, all over the world, often in very volatile areas and very challenging circumstances.

This year Serbia is presiding over the OSCE, another international organization that arose to preserve peace in the region that saw the start of the Second World War. This gives my country an opportunity, as well as an obligation, to address serious challenges and contribute to their solution. Serbia aims to fulfil the tasks of its chairmanship by drawing on its own experience and on dialogue and better understanding and respect for the interests of all.

Nowadays we are increasingly called on to confront new challenges and threats. They include rampant terrorism, hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, violence and brutal, senseless executions that violate the very values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. At the same time, we have arrived at a point when for the first time in history, humankind is faced with a real possibility of extinction if measures are not taken to prevent climate change and create the conditions for sustainable development. As we march along the road to another century, we should reinforce our respect for human rights and human dignity — for people are being killed for the worst kind of reasons. Children are being kidnapped and girls and women are being brutalized and prevented from receiving an education.

Our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter should therefore continue to be firm, unyielding and strong. During the 70 years of its existence, the

United Nations and its specialized agencies have made an enormous contribution to maintaining international peace, promoting development and fighting poverty and disease. Yet we cannot be carried away by glory or fall for complacency. We must revitalize and reform our Organization in order to make it ever more effective and responsive to the tests and challenges that will shape our future, and to ensure that the human lives we are commemorating today, lost in trenches, shelters or merely wanton executions, were not sacrificed in vain.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): I would like to thank the President for convening this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly to mark the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and to pay tribute to all the victims of the War.

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today by the observer of the European Union (see A/69/PV.87), to which I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

We are commemorating the end of the Second World War out of respect for all who were willing to sacrifice their lives for the good of freedom, peace and a life of dignity, and as a warning that we should never again allow distorted beliefs and sick ambitions to push the world into a global confrontation. It is important that we preserve the memory of the contribution and the value of each individual human affected by the ravages of the War.

The United Nations was established in order to prevent such terrible events from ever happening again. Indeed, the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations itself emphasizes that

> "We the peoples of the United Nations [are] determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

The United Nations was founded on the basis of purposes and principles that a very large number of countries could identify with. They represent common values that over time have become unassailable. Throughout the years, the Organization's objectives and main documents have remained very relevant and continue to represent the basis for coexistence among nations, as does the Helsinki Final Act, which celebrates its seventieth anniversary this year.

During the War, the collapse of respect for human rights and human life led to shocking crimes and atrocities. When it was over, people woke up to a new world, rejoicing in peace and freedom. We should never forget the horrors of the past. Keeping in mind the lessons of history, we must remember the sacrifices that were made and mourn all those who lost their lives as victims of that terrible War.

Seventy years after the Second World War, the world has become ever more complex and uncertain. In a changing security environment, we are facing a mix of new challenges. The key international organizations that were established with a view to maintaining and strengthening international peace and security and effectively tackling all our security challenges, are finding it harder to respond effectively to today's major crises. Cognizant of our shared desire to never again face the terrible suffering and destruction that the Second World War brought to humankind, the international community should reflect on possible ways to work together in order to build trust, reaffirm our common goals and commitments and strengthen our collective decision-making capacity.

In times of numerous challenges and pressing issues, nations should come together and look for effective solutions. Never before has the world been in greater need of partnerships aimed at overcoming crises and obstacles to development. Partnerships are the obvious foundation for ensuring cooperation, building mutual trust and achieving our common goals through inclusive dialogue and harmonized action. Today's solemn occasion is therefore an opportunity to recommit to effective multilateralism with the United Nations at its heart, for peace and prosperity will come only with true cooperation, solidarity and trust.

Ms. Paik Ji-ah (Republic of Korea): I would like to join previous speakers in expressing our sadness as we remember the victims of the Second World War and in emphasizing the importance of today's solemn meeting.

After suffering the untold sorrow the War brought to humankind, the international community decided to found the United Nations, the first universal international organization in human history that aimed to institutionalize global efforts to prevent war and seek permanent peace. Today, as we honour the memory of the more than 60 million people who died during the Second World War, I would like to stress that it is our duty to maintain our vigilance against threats to international peace and security and to renew collective efforts to prevent such all-out war from ever happening again.

Today, Member States have been unanimous in emphasizing how important it is to ensure that the world does not forget the horrendous tragedies inflicted on humankind and that it is able to look back squarely at the suffering caused by global warfare. I believe that genuine recognition of and remorse over past wrongdoing is the first step towards preventing another war and securing durable peace. This year also marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Building on our experience and lessons learned from the past seven decades, we should ensure that the Organization celebrates 70 more years of peace and prosperity. I strongly believe that, as long as we continue to cherish the principles and purposes of the United Nations, 70 years later, we will be able to say that a world with the United Nations has been better, safer and more prosperous than a world without it.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for the special solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War.

I now call on those representatives who have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in response to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea this morning (see A/69/PV.87).

First of all, it is regrettable that a statement criticizing Japan was made given the fact that the purpose of this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly is to commemorate all the victims of the Second World War. We do not believe that this is an appropriate forum for dealing with the specific issues raised by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Throughout its post-war history, Japan has, based on feelings of deep remorse regarding the Second World War, and by upholding all the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, walked the path of a peace-loving nation that contributes to the peace and security of the world, while consistently respecting freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Our path as a peace-loving nation will never change. In order to comprehensively resolve the outstanding issues of concern, including abductions, nuclear and missile issues in accordance with the Japan-Democratic People's Republic of Korea Pyongyang Declaration, Japan would urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete action to comprehensively resolve these issues.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to respond to the intervention made by the representative of Japan.

The theme of today's meeting is the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. This special solemn meeting of the General Assembly is in commemoration of all the victims of the Second World War. As I mentioned in my statement (see A/69/PV.87), the scars left by the Second World War remain unhealed in Asia because of the misdeeds of the Japanese authorities, and this is a very proper occasion and forum to take up the issue of the crimes committed by Japan during the Second World War.

As my delegation has stated very clearly, Japan is described as an enemy State and a defeated State that committed unimaginable crimes against Asian peoples, yet to date has offered no recognition, apology or reparations for its crimes in a clearly convincing manner. Everyone in this forum may have noted the recent visit by Premier Abe to Washington, D.C., and how he acted during his visit. The representative of Japan also mentioned the Pyongyang Declaration. This declaration has not yet been implemented because of the two-faced attitude and the very sinister purpose and goal pursued by the Japanese authorities, which is to cover up its past crimes forever while pursuing various kinds of actions and deeds.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): I apologize for taking the floor again, but my delegation is obliged to exercise its right of reply to the statement just made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

I shall refrain from entering into a detailed rebuttal of the statement made by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, since the Japanese position is already clear from my previous statement. Unfortunately, we still witness unceasing armed conflicts among States even after the Second World War. It is also regrettable that there are still infringements of human rights and violations of humanitarian law in some countries.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I want to make one point very clear to Japan. Japan must make a political decision to liquidate its past crimes. A liquidation of the past should include totally extinguishing the ambition to revive the militarism still alive in the mind of Japan. This cannot be left over to the future any longer. Japan's past crimes cannot be equivocated nor diluted or forgotten. The criminal history of Japan can never be covered up or erased. My delegation strongly urges Japan once again to make full and clear recognition, apology and reparations for its past crimes.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.

United Nations A/69/PV.89

General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-ninth session

89th plenary meeting
Friday, 8 May 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President: I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft resolution A/69/L.62, circulated under agenda item 18, entitled "Follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2008 Review Conference".

Members will recall that, at its second plenary meeting on 19 September 2014, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 18 to the Second Committee. To enable the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 18 directly in the plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 18 (*continued*)

Follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2008 Review Conference

Draft resolution (A/69/L.62)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.62, entitled "Further modalities for the third International Conference on Financing for Development".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.62?

Draft resolution A/69/L.62 was adopted (resolution 69/278).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 18.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President: I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft resolution A/69/L.61, circulated under agenda item 73, entitled "Report of the International Criminal Court". Members will recall that the Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 73 at its 36th plenary meeting, on 31 October 2014. In order for the Assembly to take action on the draft resolution, it will be necessary to reopen its consideration. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of agenda item 73 and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

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Agenda item 73 (*continued*)

Report of the International Criminal Court

Draft resolution (A/69/L.61)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.61.

Mr. van Oosterom (Netherlands): I have the honour to introduce, under agenda item 73, draft resolution A/69/L.61, entitled "Report of the International Criminal Court". In addition to the 53 countries listed in document A/69/L.61, which contains the text of the draft resolution, 15 countries have indicated their wish to be included as sponsors of the draft resolution. It is my understanding that the representative of the Secretariat will read out the names of the countries involved. This brings the total number of sponsors to 68.

On 30 October 2014, the President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Judge Sang-Hyun Song, presented the tenth annual report of the International Criminal Court to this body (see A/69/PV.34). We had a very constructive and in-depth debate, and in my introduction today I would like to highlight a few elements: universality, cooperation and complementarity.

First, on universality, in order to bolster the Court's success, universal adherence to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court remains crucial. Therefore, we welcome movement towards universality through the accession of new parties. By tradition, we mention those that have acceded to the Rome Statute in the course of the year. This past year, the Palestinian accession to the Rome Statute was the only one. It is our sincere hope that others will join in the near future.

Universal adherence to the Rome Statute is the only guarantee that perpetrators of the most horrible acts imaginable can no longer count on impunity. Earlier this week in this Assembly, we remembered the end of the Second World War (see A/69/PV.87). The universal sentiment 70 years ago was that the systemic and barbaric crimes that occurred during the War should never be allowed to happen again, and it is from this precise sentiment that the calls for a truly universal international criminal court, a court that aims to end impunity, originate.

The second item is cooperation. Let me highlight the fact that the situation with respect to outstanding arrest warrants continues to be worrying. The Court depends heavily on State cooperation in the enforcement of its orders and decisions. President Song reminded us that the Court is only as strong as States make it and that the States hold the key to unlock the Court's full potential. If States do not provide the cooperation necessary for the Court's functioning, in accordance with their legal obligations, it will not be able to fulfil its mandate, and impunity will continue to flourish. The cooperation of States, international organizations and civil society remains essential to the Court's functioning.

Cooperation is crucial, not only in relation to the arrest and surrender of accused persons but also in relation to the provision of evidence, the protection and relocation of victims and witnesses and the enforcement of sentences. We are therefore pleased that the United Nations has continued over the past year to assist the Court in its endeavours through implementation of the Relationship Agreement. We also welcome the assistance provided so far by States parties and non-States parties, and we call on all States to continue to support the Court's efforts in that respect.

My third point is on complementarity. The hallmark of the Court is the principle of complementarity. The primary responsibility to domesticate their obligations under the Rome Statute lies with the national authorities. It is also their responsibility to genuinely address cases that involve crimes under the Court's jurisdiction. If the national authorities are able to do so effectively, investigations by the Court become unnecessary. Finally, the International Criminal Court's tenth report and the ensuing debate once again underline the role of the Court in our efforts to build an international community based on not only the rule of law and respect for human rights, but also on peace and security.

Sustainable peace cannot be achieved if the perpetrators of the most serious crimes go unpunished. Peace and justice remain complementary requirements. They also serve as an essential requirement for development. Research has demonstrated that those nations that have come to terms with the wrongdoings of the past are better equipped to make progress and advance than those that are unable to do so.

The tenth annual report was the last report to be introduced by President Song. President Song dedicated 12 years of his life and career to the Court, the last six of them by serving as its President. President Song thereby became a trademark of the Court. Let me pay

tribute to him by saying that he will be remembered as a true champion of international justice.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands continues to take pride in being the host State of the International Criminal Court, and we look forward to the Court moving to its permanent premises, which are currently being built in my home city of The Hague, in the near future. The Kingdom of the Netherlands reiterates its commitment to being a partner in the pursuit of peace, justice and development — three fundamental pillars that, as I mentioned before, are inseparable and cannot be attained in isolation. The work of the Kingdom of the Netherlands within the United Nations is focused on peace, justice and development.

In conclusion, I will turn to the draft resolution itself, which continues to serve three main objectives. First, it provides political support for the International Criminal Court as an organization and for its mandate, its aims and the work it carries out. Secondly, it underlines the importance of the relationship between the Court and the United Nations on the basis of the Relationship Agreement, as both the United Nations and the ICC have an equally central role in enhancing the system of international criminal justice. Thirdly, the draft resolution serves to remind States and international and regional organizations of the need to cooperate with the International Criminal Court in carrying out its tasks.

The Netherlands hopes that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus and that it will lead to continued or even greater support for the Court. In the fight against impunity and in its attempts to hold the perpetrators of serious crimes accountable for their actions. Let us continue to cooperate together for peace and justice.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.61, entitled "Report of the International Criminal Court".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/69/L.61: Andorra, Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Georgia, Ireland, Jordan, Madagascar, Malta, Mongolia, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia and Tunisia.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.61?

Draft resolution A/69/L.61 was adopted (resolution 69/279).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote, I would like to remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Waweru (Kenya): Kenya acknowledges the adoption today by consensus of resolution A/69/279, on the report of the International Criminal Court. We are grateful to the facilitator for steering the lengthy negotiations. While we join the consensus and welcome the adoption of another General Assembly resolution on the International Criminal Court (ICC), we note that this year's resolution is a technical roll-over of resolution 68/305. As a robust participant in the negotiations, Kenya notes that the roll-over was not because of a lack of effort or hard work on the part of Member States. As often happens in multilateral diplomacy, the best efforts do not always guarantee a satisfactory outcome. Sometimes we just have to agree to disagree and consequently adopt the lowest common denominator. That should in no way be perceived as a failure, but taken in the context of the reality we find ourselves in today. At this juncture, we would like to acknowledge the delegations that put in extra effort and long hours in those negotiations.

The ICC has been in existence for 12 years now. It is a teenager. As is normal in dealing with all teenagers, direction and guidance, in this case on the part of Member States in helping the Court to strengthen international justice, are critical. The Member States should therefore refocus in order to ensure that the Court delivers justice with impartiality and adheres strictly to the Rome Statute. We also note that in recent years the Court has seen changes in senior personnel. It now has a fairly new Prosecutor and Registrar, and a new President and new Vice-Presidents, all of whom have expressed the need to undertake a wide range of reforms as one of their priorities on taking office.

In recognition of the very urgent need to change or shift gears, we request that, going forward, Member States consider redoing this resolution and changing its focus in order to better reflect the realities on the

ground and the working environment that the Court finds itself in. That would ensure that the ideals enshrined in the Rome Statute are realized in the manner that the original drafters and authors envisaged in the negotiations that culminated in its adoption at the Rome Conference. More importantly, we believe that it would ensure that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is interpreted and implemented in a manner that is consistent with those original ideals, while acknowledging the social, cultural, economic and political realities the world is facing today.

We would like to see the Statute interpreted and implemented in a way that treats all Member States equally, without artificial divisions and categorizations that depict one group as owners and gallant defenders of the ICC and the other as the subjects for which the ICC was established. That artificial dichotomy has not achieved much ,and we need to seek radical reform and a change of hearts and minds if we are to ensure a level playing field for all States without prejudice, irrespective of their geographic region and economic capacity. The success of the ICC, indeed its very survival, could well depend on our forward movement in that regard.

In conclusion, Kenya therefore calls for a complete overhaul of the text, philosophical outlook and outcomes of this resolution. We hope we will be able to embark on a better process in future and agree on a text of improved quality and greater relevance. Kenya remains cooperative and intends to join in any discussions on this resolution in an engaged and constructive manner.

Mr. Saeed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Sudan would like to affirm the noble ideals on which the United Nations was founded and through which it seeks to maintain international peace and security, achieve sustainable development and protect and reinforce human rights, in an approach based on international cooperation and dialogue, with the aim of improving friendly relations and settling disputes by peaceful means.

In order to achieve those ideals and objectives, the Charter of the United Nations includes certain guiding ideals and principles that call for us to respect States' sovereignty, refrain from interfering in their internal affairs and protect their political and regional independence, while cooperating internationally in order to solve political and social problems and disputes around the world and avoid the use or threat of use of force in international relations. All of those principles are enshrined in the Charter.

Combating impunity is a noble ideal in the cause of justice and is not an issue we disagree with. It is one of the responsibilities of national judiciaries, carrying out their functions in accordance with their internal justice systems. Attempts to politicize international justice and make it a platform for attaining narrow ambitions and targets are not consistent with the international community's efforts to achieve justice and implement the purposes and principles of the Charter. On the contrary, they violate the principles of international law and increase tensions in international relations rather than improving and strengthening them, one of the main reasons for the establishment of the United Nations.

In today's meeting, we must recall the independent and separate nature of the relationship between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court (ICC) and that there is no organic or structural relationship between them. The attempts of some States members of the ICC to turn the General Assembly into a forum for members of the Rome Statute are a source of great concern for us. That approach, which my delegation has always strongly rejected, is reflected in resolution 69/279, entitled "Report of the International Criminal Court", which is submitted on a yearly basis.

The sponsors of the resolution are trying to expand on concepts that have nothing to do with the original relationship between the ICC and the United Nations. The resolution should not be used to garner influence in the United Nations for an independent Court whose powers are limited, given the existence of an agreement that regulates the relationship between the ICC and the organs that deal with its work. My delegation calls for compliance with the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court without any expansion of the interpretation of the relationship between the two organizations.

Since it was established, the ICC's practices have shown it to be a body of international conflict and a means of political action because it concentrates mainly on Africa and targets African leaders and symbols. As a result, the general opinion of the Court in Africa is that it is led by the leaders of the powerful nations, who target developing countries. The question remains: what has the Court done with regard to other crimes committed throughout the world? Why does the Court

try to avoid discussing those other problems, crimes and scandals? Should not an international Court always combat impunity? Where are the principles of neutrality and impartiality that are the guiding principles for any kind of justice? The questions we are asking now and have been asking for a long time are difficult, but we have not received any convincing or logical answers. Yet the ICC's current practice is reflective of the normal response, which is that the ICC is focused in particular on African leaders and symbols.

The relationship of the ICC with the Security Council represents a clear politicization of the Court's work. It is not normal to have a relationship between a system whose objective is to maintain international justice and a political system that is guided by political and economic concerns. The same organ that refers cases from certain countries to the Court does not refer cases from other countries.

(*spoke in English*)

In the same resolution that referred the case to the ICC, exemptions were given to individuals from certain countries.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

As I said, it excludes the cases of some nations and citizens from being referred to the ICC. This is evidence of the difference between the noble ideas that unify the world and the political and economic interests that have nothing to do with justice. The reports of the Secretary-General concerning the relationship between the United Nations and the ICC should concentrate on and abide by the spirit of the Relationship Agreement. The ICC should not be involved in the United Nations system, as that conflicts with the spirit of the Relationship Agreement.

My delegation would like to express its concern with regard to the interference of the ICC in the work of the Secretariat and its attempt to dictate how United Nations staff should deal with Member States and with whom they should meet and should not meet. The ICC also expects reports and explanations on how United Nations staff carry out their functions, as if the Secretary-General and his staff were submitting their reports to the ICC and as if it were the ICC that had elected the Secretary-General and appointed his staff.

My delegation reaffirms its commitment to fighting impunity and achieving justice through qualified judicial mechanisms that have a mandate to do so. We categorically refuse to deal with the ICC, as we are not a State party to the Rome Statute and we do not have any obligations to it, in accordance with the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. On that basis, the Sudan is not concerned with resolution 69/279, which was just adopted by the General Assembly, and does not give it any weight. We have no obligations under that resolution.

Mr. Mamabolo (South Africa): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Samoa, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uruguay and my own country, South Africa.

We welcome the consensual adoption of resolution 69/279, entitled "Report of the International Criminal Court". It is the only General Assembly resolution dealing exclusively with the relationship between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court (ICC), the treaty-based organization at the heart of the international fight against impunity for the most serious crimes under international law — an objective shared by the United Nations. The resolution should therefore adequately reflect the ongoing cooperation between the two institutions, while addressing the most pressing challenges to the benefit of both partners. I want to highlight some of those challenges.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the ICC needs to be strengthened, and we encourage all United Nations offices, funds and programmes to collaborate effectively with the Office of Legal Affairs as the focal point for cooperation. The Secretary-General's guidelines on contacts with persons who are the subject of arrest warrants or summonses to appear are a step in the right direction when it comes to United Nations-ICC relations, and need to be implemented consistently.

The Court requires adequate financial resources to fulfil its mandate. It is under constant budgetary pressure, yet it continues to carry out activities under referrals made by the Security Council, albeit without support from the United Nations budget, as costs are exclusively borne by States parties. The General Assembly should therefore ensure the implementation of paragraph 1 of article 13 of the Relationship Agreement

between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court.

As the guardian of international peace and security, the Council has an important role to play in ensuring that there is no impunity for the most serious crimes under international law. In its relationship with the ICC, it should utilize its referral power in a consistent and coherent manner. But referring a situation is only the first step. The cooperation of States with the Court is essential to the Court's activities, while at the same time it is up to the Council to enforce its own decisions. That requires effective follow-up, support for the ICC by peace operations and adding indictees to sanctions lists, where they exist. Moreover, it is important to keep the dialogue between the ICC and the Security Council alive and to institutionalize cooperation between the two.

The Rome Statute system is based on the principle of complementarity, and the ICC remains a court of last resort. States have the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute perpetrators at the national level. We need to protect the witnesses of those crimes, wherever they occur, and must deliver justice to victims. That is relevant not only to States parties, but should be something that all States do as a matter of course.

We are very disappointed in the outcome of the negotiations this year. We would like to see something far more positive emerge at the seventieth session as a result of a transparent, productive and substantive exchange. As States parties, we want to reaffirm our collective commitment to continuing to work with all stakeholders to strengthen our common fight against impunity. We therefore look forward to serious and meaningful negotiations on the resolution during the next session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Luna (Brazil): Brazil co-sponsored resolution 69/279, on the report of the International Criminal Court (ICC), as a means of expressing our unwavering support for the Court and our steadfast commitment to the values that motivated its creation.

Nevertheless, my delegation is frustrated by the process and the outcome of our negotiations this year. The distance between the resolution and the challenges faced in the relationship between the United Nations and the ICC has not decreased. We hope that, through transparent and inclusive dialogue, we can reverse that trend at the next session and deliver a text that is truly deserving of our shared goal of promoting universal access to peace, security, justice and the fight against impunity. I would like to reiterate my delegation's growing concern about a structural issue related to the core of the relationship between the Court and the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly. Despite the clear guidance provided by article 13 of the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court — namely, that the United Nations must bear the cost of investigations and cases related to referrals by the Council — the Assembly has once again limited itself to merely acknowledging the fact that those expenses continue to be borne exclusively by the States parties to the Rome Statute.

It is regrettable that the resolution does not call upon Member States to truly address the issue. At a time when the Court faces an unprecedented workload and the members of the Council frequently entertain the idea of referring a situation to the ICC, we must objectively reflect on the sustainability of a system in which the costs of implementing such a decision are met solely by the States parties to the Rome Statute. It is also important to bear in mind that the General Assembly bears exclusive responsibility in the consideration and approval of the Organization's budget, as provided for in Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Every new ratification of the Rome Statute marks an important step towards the promotion of peace and justice. Brazil welcomes the accession of Palestine to the Statute. States that exercise their right to join multilateral treaties, especially those conceived for defending human rights and combating impunity, should be welcomed, rather than met with reprisals and sanctions. We expect that this accession will encourage others to become party to the Rome Statute.

Enhancing the universality of the ICC is a means of promoting peace and justice and of addressing a key international dimension of the rule of law that all States should commit to. International criminal justice should apply to all.

Ms. Millicay (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the group of States parties to the Rome Statute. At the same time, we wish to make a statement in our national capacity.

Argentina co-sponsored resolution 69/279, due to its firm support for the International Criminal Court (ICC). My country welcomes its adoption by consensus, because the relationship between the ICC and the

United Nations is undeniable. The Court has embraced the objective of the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern. In that respect, and in accordance with the Rome Statute, the Security Council has made two referrals to the Court.

The International Criminal Court is a permanent, complementary criminal justice tribunal. In other words, it intervenes when a national justice system is unwilling or unable to act. But the Court lacks its own enforcement mechanism; rather, it depends on the cooperation of all States, not only States parties. Argentina highly values the universalization of the Rome Statute. In that regard, we join others in welcoming Palestine — the most recent accession to the Statute — as a party to the Rome Statute, because that contribution has bolstered the Statute's full universalization.

In addition to highlighting the importance of the resolution on the ICC that we have just adopted, which is the only resolution the Organization adopts on its relationship with the Court, Argentina wishes to make some additional points about the process and the outcome of the negotiations that took place during this session.

Argentina appreciates the importance of consensus, but also wishes to emphasize that it is not an end in itself. The consensus of the General Assembly on the ICC must have suitable substance that appropriately reflects the evolution of the Court and its relationship with the United Nations, as well as new challenges it faces. That is why Argentina does not support the approach of exclusively favouring a mere technical update of the resolution, as several delegations encouraged us to do at this session, because this approach unfortunately prevents the incorporation of some substantive aspects that we consider to be essential, as follows.

Paragraph 14 merely makes a factual statement, namely, that the expenses related to Security Council referrals to the International Criminal Court continue to be borne exclusively by States parties to the Rome Statute. However, no reference is made to another statement of fact, which is that the Rome Statute provides that the costs of referrals should be borne by the United Nations, a provision also reflected in the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the Court, which the Assembly adopted by consensus (resolution 58/318).

We therefore have before us a very disturbing practice on the part of the Security Council as to the financing of referrals, which encroaches on the Assembly despite the support of a sizeable majority for full compliance with article 115 (b) of the Rome Statute, and the Relationship Agreement, which makes it subject to the approval of the General Assembly. It is worth mentioning that the draft resolution submitted to the Security Council in connection with referring the situation in Syria to the Court (S/2014/348) made mention of the need to finance the expenses related to investigations and trials relating to situations referred by the Security Council. For Argentina, it is not acceptable that the Assembly is prevented from making a decision on this issue, for which it is fully empowered by the Charter of the United Nations, and we think it should necessarily be addressed. To fail to do so jeopardizes the sustainability of the Court's investigations and the credibility of the Organization.

The provisions of the Rome Statute and the Relationship Agreement are clear. It is also clear that it is not acceptable for the Security Council to take the decision to make referrals to the Court and also seek to prevent it from receiving the funding it needs from the Organization. The ongoing and fierce opposition of a small minority to a course of action that the Assembly needs to take promptly could lead to all those of us who have been struggling for years to support the ICC to explore other avenues for taking such a decision.

Also in relation to the Security Council, Argentina agrees with many Member States that it is necessary that this body responsibly follow up on the referrals it makes to the Court. So far, the Council has made little progress in implementing the commitment it undertook in presidential statement S/PRST/2013/2. We believe that the General Assembly is in a position to insist upon a more organic institutional relationship and more fluid cooperation with the Court.

Another aspect in which it seems impossible to see progress in resolution 69/279, despite the fact that there has been tangible progress among the States parties, is the ratification of the amendments to the Rome Statute adopted in Kampala in 2010, including the ratification of the amendment on the crime of aggression. For reasons we do not understand, the General Assembly has been prevented from reflecting in its resolutions the progress being made towards the entry into force of the amendment of aggression, an issue that clearly shows the contribution of the Rome Statute to international peace and security.

My country, which hopes to ratify the Kampala amendments as soon as possible, believes that it is unfortunate that this is happening, although we must recognize that, even if the resolution adopted does not reflect it, the entry into force of the amendment on aggression and the activation of the Court's jurisdiction in 2017 will be a reality, making the Rome Statute's contribution to international peace and security even more obvious.

Mr. Mnisi (Swaziland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The significant contribution of the International Criminal Court in the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern is also a contribution to the objectives of the Organization. We hope that the General Assembly, which throughout its history has made outstanding contributions to the evolution of human rights and justice, will in future be able to adequately reflect the current challenges facing the Court and its relationship with the United Nations.

Mr. Ceriani (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Uruguay voted in favour of resolution 69/279, having joined the consensus as it has done in previous years, on the understanding that the vote endorses the current relationship between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court and supports its management decisions of the last year. We recall that the resolution is based on the annual management report of the Court (A/69/321). Furthermore, our delegation was a sponsor of the draft resolution.

Uruguay aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of South Africa on behalf of a specific group of countries, including ours. In that regard, Uruguay wishes to make some additional comments to those mentioned in that statement.

Our delegation does not consider the way the work was conducted in the current year to be optimal or appropriate, and even less so with regard to the outcome, namely, the technical update, which is the least ambitious possible without taking into account the option of there not being a resolution. Uruguay had wished to go through the natural process of negotiating the draft resolution with the United Nations membership, which would surely have brought about results with more substance and would have been much more suited to the important work that the Court is doing both in combating impunity for the most serious crimes at the international level and in its deterrent effect on them. Our delegation hopes that, on the grounds of evading or avoiding negotiations that are deemed complex, the alleged misunderstandings and the rapid dénouement, without room being made for any possible negotiation, will not be repeated in the years to come, given that transparency is the prime value at all times.

Finally, Uruguay notes that it is clear that what happened in the process of the adoption of the resolution does not create a precedent for future negotiations on future reports of the International Criminal Court.

Ms. Guillén-Grillo (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of South Africa on behalf of a group of States parties. In our national capacity, we wish to address some further issues.

The International Criminal Court is undoubtedly the most important achievement in recent years in the area of international justice. Born of the will of the international community to end impunity for the most serious crimes against humanity and to bring justice to their victims, its essence and main strength lie in the jurisdiction erga omnes, a fundamental principle when one speaks of justice.

Because that desire is universal, the world demands that there be no State where there is room for impunity. Accordingly, Costa Rica welcomes Palestine's joining the Rome Statute, which brought the number of States parties to 123, and reiterates the need to continue promoting ratification of the Statute in order to achieve universality.

Costa Rica also welcomes the adoption of resolution 69/279 by consensus. Nevertheless, my delegation expected there to be a transparent and inclusive process that would allow for the holding of genuine negotiations on the text of the resolution.

The Relationship Agreement between the Court and the United Nations was developed in response to resolution 58/79, in December 2003, which, adopted by consensus, called for the concluding of such Agreement. However, there are many issues outstanding with respect to the instrumentalization of the contents thereof. Costa Rica would like to take this opportunity to mention some of the issues that it thinks should be included in the resolution in order for its importance and relevance to be enhanced.

First, the Statute provides that, through the Security Council, the United Nations shall refer to the International Criminal Court cases of heinous crimes committed in States that are not parties to the Statute. That power should be exercised with the greatest responsibility and objectivity. Costa Rica has insistently argued for establishing a uniform, predictable and transparent protocol for referring cases to the Court. In that regard, we welcome the fact that France is championing the proposal of the Small Five Group, of which Costa Rica is part, which asks the permanent members to sign a code of conduct in which they undertake not to use the veto in cases of mass atrocities.

In addition, my delegation asks that, for future referrals, the Security Council not incorporate exceptions to the Court's jurisdiction that violate the principle of equality before the law, and thereby undermine the credibility of the Council and that of the Court. These resolutions should also establish the duty of all States Members of the United Nations to cooperate with the Court.

Another crucial issue is the financing of referrals to the Court by the United Nations, as other delegations have already mentioned. Because the Charter of the United Nations makes the Security Council responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Court, in taking up such referrals, is helping that body fulfil its mandate. In cases where there is cooperation, article 13 of the Agreement, which provides for the financial contribution of the United Nations, shall be applied between the Court and the United Nations.

The foregoing and other key issues, such as the practice of informing the Prosecutor and the President of the Assembly of States Parties beforehand of any meetings with persons who are the subject of arrest warrants issued by the Court that were considered necessary for the performance of United Nations-mandated tasks, are matters covered in the report submitted by the President of the Court (A/69/321); as such, given their timeliness, their mention in the resolution we have just adopted was not only appropriate but particularly relevant.

Costa Rica sincerely regrets that today we have once again adopted a resolution that does not meet the commitments set forth in the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the Court, and, even worse, that does not respond to the needs of the international criminal justice system, a goal that is in the interest of all States Members of the United Nations, parties and non-parties to the Rome Statute alike.

We hope that negotiations at the next session will be conducted in a way that will allow for a genuine and fruitful discussion.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 73?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(g) Appointment of members of the Joint Inspection Unit

Note by the President of the General Assembly (A/69/881)

The Acting President: As indicated in document A/69/881, the General Assembly is required, during its current session, to appoint members of the Joint Inspection Unit to fill the vacancies that will arise from the expiration of the terms of office on 31 December 2015 of Mr. Gérard Biraud (France), Mr. Papa Louis Fall (Senegal), Mr. István Posta (Hungary) and Mr. Cihan Terzi (Turkey).

In accordance with the procedures described in article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, and pursuant to resolution 61/238, of 22 December 2006, and having consulted Member States and drawn up a list of countries from among the regional groups concerned, the President of the General Assembly has requested Canada, Germany, Morocco and Romania to propose candidates to serve for a period of five years beginning on 1 January 2016.

As also indicated in document A/69/881, the candidates, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 59/267, of 23 December 2004, should have experience in at least one of the following fields: oversight, audit, inspection, investigation, evaluation, finance, project evaluation, programme evaluation, human resources management, management, public administration, monitoring or programme performance, in addition to knowledge of the United Nations system and its role in international relations.

As further indicated in document A/69/881, as a result of the consultations held in accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, including consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council and with the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the President submits to the Assembly the candidatures of Mr. Jeremiah Kramer (Canada), Ms. Gönke Roscher (Germany), Ms. Aicha Afifi (Morocco) and Mr. Petru Dumitriu (Romania), for appointment as members of the Joint Inspection Unit for a five-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2016 and expiring on 31 December 2020.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Mr. Jeremiah Kramer (Canada), Ms. Gönke Roscher (Germany), Ms. Aicha Afifi (Morocco) and Mr, Petru Dumitriu (Romania) as members of the Joint Inspection Unit for a five-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2016 and expiring on 31 December 2020?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

United Nations A/69/PV.90

General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-ninth session

90th plenary meeting
Friday, 15 May 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Imnadze (Georgia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 136 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/69/722/Add.6)

The Acting President: Before proceeding to the item on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/69/722/Add.6, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/69/722/Add.5, Grenada has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/69/722/Add.6?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 69 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(c) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolution (A/69/L.66)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now resume its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 69 in order to take action on draft resolution A/69/L.66, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in response to the devastating effects of the earthquake in Nepal". Members will recall that the Assembly held its debate on agenda item 69 and its sub-items (a) to (c) at its 69th and 70th plenary meetings, on 11 and 12 December 2014.

I thank all present for attending this important meeting on the urgent humanitarian situation affecting Nepal and the surrounding region following the devastating earthquake of 25 April and the subsequent earthquake of 12 May.

I express my deepest condolences to all those who have been affected by this terrible tragedy, including the families of those who lost their lives in Nepal, India, China and Bangladesh.

I commend the leadership demonstrated by the Government of Nepal and its steadfast efforts to address this challenging situation. I also thank all Member States, including the neighbouring countries, and the organizations that have responded to the crisis.

Nearly three weeks after the initial earthquake, the situation in Nepal remains of grave concern. In many places, the conditions on the ground are dire, with relief efforts suffering a serious setback following the second earthquake earlier this week. While long-term recovery and rehabilitation efforts will play a crucial role in rebuilding Nepal, there are immediate concerns that warrant the full support of the international community.

First, the humanitarian needs in the country are urgent and significant. With some 2.8 million displaced

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people, the provision of shelter is of the utmost importance. Every effort must be made to ensure that people living in open spaces have access to basic shelter as soon as possible. Many of the displaced also need food assistance as a vital necessity.

Secondly, access to health care, sanitation and hygiene services are critical priorities that must be addressed. As we have learned from similar natural disasters, increases in mortality, morbidity and outbreaks of communicable diseases can be prevented through access to basic health care and clean water. It is critical to improve sanitation and hygiene services in order to avoid potential outbreaks of cholera and diarrhoea, so as to prevent a second wave of fatalities.

Thirdly, beyond the needs of urban centres, people displaced from rural villages need to be able to return to their homes before the start of the planting season. Failing to enable people to return to their respective villages to plant crops could have severe consequences for the country's food security.

Finally, as we coordinate our relief efforts, we must bear in mind that there is only a small window of opportunity to assist the affected communities. With the monsoon season set to start in June, it is of the utmost importance that a comprehensive relief effort be launched as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Since the initial earthquake, the international community has put forth tremendous efforts to support the people of Nepal. Within hours of the disaster, neighbouring countries and other nations around the world deployed substantial assets, personnel and relief supplies. To date, more than 40 Member States have pledged support to the Nepal earthquake flash appeal launched by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, while dozens more have provided in-kind assistance and personnel, field hospitals, blankets and urban search-and-rescue teams. I commend all those who have demonstrated solidarity with the people and the Government of Nepal in the wake of this horrific disaster. I urge their continued support going forward.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: Over the past three weeks, the lives of 8 million Nepalese people have been changed beyond recognition. First, an earthquake of magnitude 7.8 struck on 25 April, leaving some 8,000 people dead and more than double that number injured. A little more than two weeks later, a second earthquake struck on 12 May, of magnitude 7.3. That powerful tremor killed dozens of people and injured more than 2,000. I would like to express my sincere condolences to everyone who lost beloved family members, friends or colleagues.

A disaster of this scale affects every community and every sector of society. Some 400,000 homes were destroyed and another 280,000 damaged. Hundreds of thousands of people were left homeless and in urgent need of emergency shelter, food, clean water and health care. The earthquakes affected 39 of Nepal's 75 districts. Some of the hardest-hit villages are in the most remote locations, on top of Nepal's beautiful and majestic mountains. Sadly, the number of people killed is still rising as aid workers reach those communities.

The Government of Nepal has led the response effort, and the Nepal Armed Forces have played a key role in locating people in remote areas who have been cut off from help. During the initial days, the Nepalese army search-and-rescue teams evacuated more than 2,400 people from isolated communities to Kathmandu and Pokhara. The army mobilized some 10,000 troops to support the relief operation. We deployed a United Nations disaster assessment coordination team within 24 hours to support the Government's efforts. Among other things, the team helped to coordinate the arrival and deployment of 76 search-and-rescue teams from 31 countries, which arrived in the next few days. More than 1,870 rescue and medical personnel and almost 120 search dogs were involved. I thank all the countries and organizations that sent support in those vital hours after the earthquake struck, including the States members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the European Union and other multilateral institutions.

Nearly three weeks since the first earthquake, international search-and-rescue personnel and medical teams are now leaving Nepal, but humanitarian operations are intensifying. Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos has just returned from the disaster zone. Relief goods are entering the country more quickly. Aid routes are becoming more accessible. Humanitarian agencies and their partners are relying on the resilience of local communities. They are working at the local level to get help to the most vulnerable. They are using every means possible to reach communities that are cut off from transportation networks. Members of the Nepal Trekkers Association are climbing to the most remote communities to distribute relief materials where

there is no access by road or air. Overall, more than 1 million people have been reached with food, and some 350,000 have been provided with clean water. More than 150,000 families have been provided with emergency shelter materials. Emergency health teams are present across the country. Medical tents have been provided to many of the 26 hospitals and more than 900 health centres that were damaged. Humanitarian aid is making a difference, but we need to do more.

With the monsoon season starting in June, there is an urgent need to make sure that nearly half a million people have emergency shelter before the rains start in earnest. Heavy rain and hail are already affecting people living in tents. The monsoon season is also the planting season. If farmers are unable to prepare their land and plant their fields, next year's harvest will be severely affected. The monsoon season will also increase the danger of cholera and other water-borne diseases. Some areas of Nepal have lost almost all their water and sanitation facilities. There is a real danger that heavy rains could result in a major epidemic.

I cannot stress enough the importance of getting aid, including clean water and sanitation supplies, to everyone in need within the next few weeks. Support is also urgently needed to generate emergency employment, promote local economic recovery and ensure livelihood support. Even as we deal with those pressing needs, we must look ahead. mindful of the continuum from emergency assistance to support for recovery and development. Emergency relief is never enough. Saving people's lives is important, but people must also be able to sustain their livelihoods. They want a future. Cash interventions and emergency employment offer interim support, but efforts to stimulate small and medium enterprises, and to use locally sourced skills and materials, will have long-reaching benefits.

Nepal has been torn apart. Years of development gains have been wiped out. Tens of thousands of people who had been brought out of poverty are at risk of falling back. Basic social services, in particular health care and education, have been interrupted. The housing sector, power generation, communications and tourism have all suffered badly. There are clear lessons emerging about building risk awareness and reduction into the reconstruction effort.

Discussions among the Government, the European Union, the development banks and the United Nations are already under way and plans for an initial post-disaster needs assessment are in progress. This assessment, covering both the economic and social losses, will bring partners together behind a single, Government-led recovery plan. Experience has shown that the post-disaster period is an opportunity to reassess vulnerabilities and to build back better. Our efforts in Nepal, therefore, must be ambitious, long-term and risk-informed if they are to protect against future losses.

This is the first major natural disaster to strike since the international agreement on disaster risk reduction was reached in Sendai in March. A key component of that agreement was a commitment to undertake a resilient recovery approach in the event of a disaster. We must now support Nepal in translating this new global framework into action. I am pleased and encouraged by the solidarity shown by Member States to Nepal at this critical time. I appreciate the General Assembly's efforts to help the people of Nepal cope with their devastating loss. The flash appeal launched on 28 April calls for $423 million to support the people of Nepal through the immediate life-saving response phase. I want to thank all Member States that have contributed so far. However, without more robust support, more lives will be lost.

The appeal is currently only 14 per cent funded, at about $60 million. This includes $15 million allocated from the Central Emergency Response Fund. An additional $365 million is urgently needed. Needless to say, the 14 per cent funding is far from sufficient. Let us resolve to do more and better. We are overwhelmed by an unprecedented number of humanitarian challenges around the world. Humanitarian partners urgently need funds to be able to do their work. In Nepal, we have an opportunity to make a real difference in the next weeks and months. With Member States' continued help, the United Nations and our partners will support the people of Nepal as they recover and rebuild. I count on their strong support and leadership.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Spain to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.66.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Sir, for convening this plenary meeting on the aftermath of the earthquake, or rather I should say the earthquakes, that have devastated Nepal and affected several neighbouring countries since 25 April.

I am making this statement in my national capacity, but Spain aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later by the observer of the European Union.

First and foremost, I wish to pay my heartfelt respects to the memory of the victims and convey my condolences and support to their families and other loved ones. I also wish to express solidarity, hope and confidence in the ability of the people and Government of Nepal to overcome these dire circumstances. They know they are not alone. We stand with Nepal in word and we should stand with them even more, if possible, in deed.

We must all respond as best we can to the call of the Secretary-General and be generous to Nepal. Its tragedy, which we all feel as our own, could at any time be our own because all of us in one way or another are exposed to natural disasters of similar magnitude. The feelings of solidarity, hope and confidence to which I alluded are what led my country and my delegation, in full cooperation with Nepal, to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.66 to the Assembly today for its consideration and action. I am sure it will be strongly supported.

The preamble of the draft resolution begins by expressing our condolences for the more than 8,000 who died as a result of the earthquake of 25 April and its after shocks. According to recent data, there are more than 18,000 wounded and nearly 3 million internally displaced persons. In total, more than 8 million people are in need of assistance, many of them in hard-to-reach areas. Given the scope of the disaster, could it have been otherwise? The entire social and economic fabric of Nepal has been affected, and more than 20 per cent of the country's economy has disappeared.

The draft resolution also recalls that Nepal has special needs and is particularly vulnerable at this time for various reasons. It is vulnerable not only because it is geographically located on a powerful earthquake fault line, but also because it is a landlocked developing country and is still emerging from conflict. Nepal is special above all because of its immense natural attractions and its extraordinary contributions to the cultural and spiritual heritage of humankind. This makes it an undeniable tourist attraction. However, that wealth is at the same time a source of vulnerability, when, as has happened, an important part of its most iconic monuments and natural parks have been seriously damaged by the earthquake. Therefore, the operative part of the draft resolution reminds us of the need to combine the immediate rescue and rehabilitation efforts with medium- and long-term reconstruction and development efforts.

The experience of the United Nations and its main humanitarian and development agencies in this field are and will be crucial. We also underscore that mitigation and preparation efforts made before such disasters occur can prevent their effects from being even greater. In this connection, the draft resolution also refers to the relevance of the Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

The draft resolution is thus not only timely but also necessary. It was in that conviction that we submitted it to the Assembly for adoption. I must say that the decision to submit the draft resolution came directly from my Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, who was in the region when the earthquake struck on 25 April. His first reaction was to make his official aeroplane available to those who needed it and to mobilize Spanish cooperation. In doing so, he expressed the feelings of Spanish society as a whole — a society that has repeatedly demonstrated its empathy and solidarity with those who suffer most. His second reaction was to instruct us to be in immediate contact with and to make ourselves available to the Nepalese Mission in order to jointly push forward this draft resolution, as an expression of our support to that friendly country and to encourage rescue, reconstruction and ongoing development efforts. We have done this extremely quickly, as the occasion demanded, with the active participation and cooperation of many delegations and the Secretariat itself.

We have been able to prepare and present to the Assembly the draft we now have before us. We are sincerely grateful for the excellent job done by the experts on humanitarian issues from all the delegations, beginning with my own mission's splendid team. This is an achievement for all of us that demonstrates that at times such as these we can act as what we are, a truly United Nations, united in the face of the adversity confronting one of us, in compassion and in action.

I would like to share the fact that so far today's draft resolution has been sponsored by more than 110 countries. There is still time for those that have not yet become sponsors to do so, but they should hurry, because every vote for it sends a message of life and hope to the people of Nepal. We owe it to them and to ourselves.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.66, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in response to the devastating effects of the earthquake in Nepal".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Pollard (Department of General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/69/L.66, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Algeria, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Belarus, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Fiji, France, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Lichtenstein, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nigeria, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Senegal, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, the Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.66?

Draft resolution A/69/L.66 was adopted (resolution 69/280).

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union to make a statement.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

We wish to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and you, Sir, for presiding over today's meeting on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

What all of us here today are saying to the Government and the people of Nepal is that they are not alone. Today the General Assembly has adopted resolution 69/280, proposed jointly by Nepal and one of the EU's member States, Spain. The remaining 27 EU member States are sponsors of the resolution, which also has massive support among the rest of the United Nations membership. At moments like this, such initiatives are tangible proof of global solidarity and an expression of our common humanity.

The earthquake has killed more than 8,000 people, wounded 18,000, displaced 2.8 million and affected as many 8 million Nepalis. It has caused immense material damage, not only to the country's rich cultural heritage but also to housing, health-care centres, schools and other key parts of its infrastructure. Nepal needs more than our expressions of sympathy. The other message of the EU and its member States is one of continued concrete support to the country in every possible way that can help it help overcome the earthquake's devastating effects.

We started by supporting Nepal in the immediate aftermath of the disaster by sending first-response teams, with the EU and 16 of our member States contributing search-and-rescue teams and other experts and assets through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. We are now also supporting Nepal in its immense humanitarian relief effort. European Union Commissioner Christos Stylianides visited Nepal with United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos just a few days after the disaster, with €6 million for humanitarian relief and with teams from the European Commission's Department of Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection on the ground to help identify needs and prepare and monitor our support.

We are determined, with our partners, to help the Nepalese authorities address the priority needs of the affected population, such as emergency shelter, food assistance and health care. Some of the initial challenges to delivery, such as improving the airport's operational capacity and facilitating customs procedures, have been successfully addressed. The remaining challenges include optimizing the use of foreign military assets, particularly airlift capacity. It is urgent that the emergency humanitarian response be scaled up so that it can reach remote villages beyond district centres, where there are large areas that have still not been accessed in what some are already describing as a rural disaster. In providing aid, we must take into account the specific assistance and protection needs of women and men of all ages and particularly women and children's

vulnerability to gender-based violence and trafficking. Adequate support must reach people in need before the monsoon season.

In parallel, the EU and its member States will continue supporting Nepal in its recovery and reconstruction process as well as its long-term development. We expect the post-disaster needs assessment to start soon, and that should help us to better identify some of the needs and priorities for national and international support. The EU has already appropriated €16.6 million for recovery and reconstruction on top of significant contributions from individual EU member States. We support Nepal in its commitment to recovery. We also support the country's determination to strengthen its resilience and capacity at all levels to withstand and recover from future disasters of this kind. Finally, we also support Nepal in its commitment to making the drafting of a constitution a priority, thus contributing to its longer-term stability, which is another crucial condition for lasting recovery and development.

I would like to end by commending Nepal on the leadership demonstrated by its authorities and the resilience demonstrated by its people. We realize that its remaining needs are huge. But the EU and its member States will be there with both humanitarian and development instruments for as long as it takes to help the people of Nepal, including by providing our share of the international effort in a possible future pledging conference.

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that such explanations are limited to 10 minutes.

Mr. Mukerji (India): Let me join other delegations in conveying our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Nepal, who have endured large-scale devastation in the aftermath of a massive earthquake on 25 April and several aftershocks. While we share the grief of the people of Nepal, we are gratified to see the international community rise to the occasion and assist in alleviating the suffering faced by the people of Nepal. Today's adoption of resolution 69/280 is an expression of this strong support, and we are happy to be one of its sponsors.

India has been responding to several global humanitarian relief operations in keeping with our resources and capabilities. We were at the forefront of providing support after the Asian tsunami, extending assistance in the aftermath of the Fukushima disaster, contributing to the Ebola Trust Fund and evacuating Indians, as well as many foreign nationals, from war-torn Yemen recently. We have endeavoured to be the early responders in cases of humanitarian crisis.

We are united with Nepal by history and a border, an open border. The courage with which the people of Nepal have handled the situation shows the vitality of the people of that country. Our Prime Minister has visited Nepal twice since assuming office around a year ago. The visit of our Prime Minister in August 2014 further strengthened the broad spectrum of political, economic, social and cultural ties that are deep-rooted at the levels of both the Government and the people. In many ways, the destinies of our countries are interlinked, and therefore we feel the pain of our Nepalese brethren even more. Our Prime Minister spoke with both the President and Prime Minister of Nepal soon after the earthquake occurred. The relief and rescue work provided by India was done in consultation and coordination with the Nepalese Government.

As a close friend and neighbour, we launched Operation Maitri, which means "friendship" in both Nepali and Hindi, to aid the rescue and relief efforts in Nepal. The Government of India swiftly swung into action after the devastating earthquake by immediately dispatching National Disaster Response Force teams and special aircraft with rescue and relief materials. The relief efforts from India were guided by a national crisis-management committee, chaired by the Prime Minister of India and continuously monitored by a committee of senior Government officials.

Special flights were launched with teams from our National Disaster Response Force with rescue and relief materials. The first flight was dispatched with relief materials within four hours of the earthquake. There were 37 non-stop sorties of C-17 Globemaster, IL-76 and C-130 aircrafts carrying 550 tons of relief material. Thirteen helicopters of the Indian army were operating from Kathmandu and Pokhara. We deployed 16 teams of the National Disaster Response Force comprising over 700 trained personnel and 18 army engineering teams. It was not just the Government; 650 trucks carrying 5,000 tons of relief material were also sent by non-governmental organizations and state governments.

With regard to medical assistance, the Indian army set up three field hospitals, and the Air Force deployed

a rapid-action team. Our medical personnel comprises surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and technicians drawn from all our premier hospitals. A national trauma center with five operation theatres was operationalized by the team sent by our Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. We have provided medical supplies, stretchers and oxygen concentrators. We have helped with the restoration of the electricity supply and have made an operational query-based single database of missing persons.

Finally, we would like to mention that we are also closely engaged with the efforts of the United Nations in Nepal. Now that the search-and-rescue phase is over, our commitment extends to partnering with the Government and the people of Nepal for rehabilitation and reconstruction. In conclusion, I would like to quote our honourable Prime Minister's words: "India will make all efforts to wipe the tears of every person in Nepal, hold their hands and stand with them".

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting and Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his briefing. We extend our sincere condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of Nepal and express appreciation to the countries, regional and international organizations and all other parties that have been actively participating in and supporting the rescue and relief efforts in Nepal.

The unanimous adoption of resolution 69/280, initiated by Nepal and Spain and sponsored by China and a large number of other countries to express support for Nepal, shows the solidarity of the international community in jointly overcoming the disaster. The strong earthquake on 25 April and its aftershocks have inflicted heavy human and economic losses on Nepal and severely damaged its economic and social development and infrastructure. As a least developed, landlocked developing country, Nepal is in urgent need of emergency international support as well as sustained support and assistance, reconstruction and long-term development.

While working to meet the urgent needs of the disaster-affected population, the international community should support the Nepalese Government's priority goals in disaster prevention, recovery and reconstruction, help improve Nepal's disaster resistance and ensure the effective coordination of international efforts with Nepal's national endeavours.

Nepal is a close and friendly neighbour to China. Our two peoples are like brothers. The Chinese Government and people share the pain of the Nepalese people. Immediately after the disaster struck, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang sent messages of condolence to their Nepalese counterparts to express the solidarity of the Chinese Government and people with the Nepalese Government and people, and our readiness to provide all possible assistance to rescue and relief efforts.

The Chinese international rescue team, the Chinese Government medical team and the Chinese military rescue and relief and medical teams arrived in Nepal shortly after the quake and immediately started work in the areas of search and rescue, medical treatment, epidemic prevention and control, and personnel training. More than 1,000 rescue, medical, epidemic prevention and control, and training pesonnel from the Chinese Government, military and police are working in Nepal, carrying out the largest international humanitarian rescue and relief operation outside China since the founding of the People's Republic.

After the earthquake, the Chinese Government promptly announced two batches of emergency humanitarian aid to Nepal totaling ¥60 million, or about $10 million. More than 40 military flights were dispatched, delivering 650 tons of tents, generators, water-purification equipment, blankets and other emergency supplies to Nepal. When Nepal was struck by a strong aftershock on 12 May, the Chinese Government announced another batch of emergency aid totaling ¥80 million, or about $13 million. Supplies are being collected and arranged and will reach disaster-stricken areas as soon as possible.

In addition, many provincial governments; non-governmental organizations such as the Red Cross Society of China, the Chinese Foundation for Poverty Alleviation and Blue Sky rescue and relief team; and enterprises and individual citizens in China all provided donations in cash and in kind, which fully demonstrated the broad and solid social foundation for China-Nepal friendship.

The Chinese Government will maintain close communication with the Nepalese Government to get updates about the disaster situation and the requirements on the ground and on that basis provide help in various forms for medical treatment, epidemic prevention and control, temporary relocation of the disaster-affected people and post-disaster reconstruction.

We are convinced that with the help of the international community, the Nepalese Government and people will surely overcome the disaster and rebuild their homes.

Mr. Erdman (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, I would like to express our deepest condolences to all those affected by the earthquake in Nepal, including the families of those in Nepal, both Nepalese and visitors, who died or were injured in the earthquake and its aftermath. There are no words adequate to express our sense of loss.

We are working closely with the Government of Nepal and the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to provide assistance and support. The United States commends the emergency and medical responders from Nepal, the United Nations, Governments and non-governmental organizations around the world who have courageously stepped up to help those most in need. We especially remember today — and extend condolences to their families — those courageous responders who have given their own lives in the service of aiding their fellow human beings.

Our disaster assistance response team and urban search-and-rescue personnel, along with the United States military, have joined the response efforts and have been helping to search for and rescue survivors, provide logistics, conduct medical evacuations and aerial surveys and airlift plastic sheeting and medical supplies in support of the Government of Nepal and the international humanitarian effort. To date, the United States has pledged more than $32 million in humanitarian assistance. We will continue to assist Nepal during the emergency response phase and into the process of rebuilding and reconstruction.

The United States also remains committed to continuing our work with international organizations, the Government of Nepal and the Kathmandu-based National Society for Earthquake Technology on disaster risk-reduction strategies for disaster resilience. To the people in Nepal and the region affected by this tragedy, we send our heartfelt sympathies. The United States was a sponsor of the resolution adopted today (resolution 69/280), and we stand with Nepal during this difficult time.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): I thank the President for convening today's meeting. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing on the situation in Nepal. And I would also like to express my gratitude to Spain for taking the initiative, together with Nepal, to introduce the resolution just adopted (resolution 69/280).

On behalf of the people and the Government of Japan, I would like to express our profound sympathy and deepest condolences to the people of Nepal for the lives lost and the destruction caused by the devastating earthquake. My sympathy and condolences also go to the neighbouring countries — Bangladesh, China and India — that were hit by the same earthquake.

The second earthquake, or aftershock, of 12 May showed that the people of Nepal still have to face the fear of earthquakes. Japan has in the past also experienced the devastation of innumerable earthquakes, most recently the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. We know very well that recovery and reconstruction from such a disaster is not an easy task and will require efforts over the long term. In our own experience, expressions of international solidarity are also very important.

At the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which was held in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015, the international community reaffirmed the importance of disaster risk reduction and resilience-building with the notion of "building back better". The resolution we have adopted today also clearly reflects this idea.

With regard to emergency humanitarian assistance, Japan dispatched disaster relief teams on 26 April, one day after the earthquake. We also delivered emergency relief goods, such as tents and blankets, on the same day. In addition, Japan decided to extend emergency assistance in the amount of $14 million to support Nepal. That assistance will soon be provided through international organizations, including United Nations humanitarian and development agencies.

The international community must respond to Nepal's urgent needs for recovery and reconstruction. In order to assist the country in its efforts towards recovery and reconstruction in a coordinated and effective manner, Japan announced its readiness to co-organize a donor conference together with Nepal and the Asian Development Bank. We also expect other Member States and international agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, to take part in the initiative.

I wish to conclude my statement by reaffirming our determination to always stand by the Government and the people of Nepal.

Mr. Anshor (Indonesia): I would like to begin by expressing once again Indonesia's deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Nepal for their loss and the unfolding impacts caused by the earthquakes, which have resulted in an immeasurable amount of destruction and casualties. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who have felt the impact of the earthquakes.

It is a difficult moment for the Government and the people of Nepal. Yet it has often been in moments such as this, when the human spirit is at its lowest ebb, that we have witnessed tremendous resilience. We know that the people of Nepal have a remarkable spirit and that they will rise above this enormous test of will. We hope that the international community will continue to support the recovery and rebuilding of Nepal so that the Government and its people will be able to restore their lives to normalcy and attain resilience.

I would like to commend the Government of Nepal for its continued commitment and leadership in rapidly delivering humanitarian assistance and coordinating the relief efforts in the country. In contribution to the emergency relief efforts, Indonesia, like many other countries, is sending medical, logistical and other teams and supplies to Nepal.

The resolution that was just adopted (resolution 69/280) should help accelerate the delivery of assistance by the United Nations system in Nepal so that the needs of the people can be met. That assistance should further strengthen the coordination within the United Nations system to ensure the effectiveness of delivery on the ground.

Indonesia is proud to have joined others in sponsoring today's resolution. I would like to express my appreciation to the Permanent Missions of Nepal and Spain for their commendable stewardship during the informal negotiations. Indonesia hopes that the resolution will provide a platform for partnership between the United Nations system and all humanitarian actors, including global and regional financial institutions, as well as the private sector, with a view to supporting the long-term efforts of the Government and the people of Nepal in building back better and strengthening their resilience to disasters.

Indonesia stands ready, together with the Government of Nepal and others, to undertake further cooperation, including in sharing best practices, and to support the efforts to strengthen disaster risk-reduction and resilience-building in Nepal.

Mr. Shearman (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by expressing the heartfelt condolences of the Government and the people of the United Kingdom to the Government and the people of Nepal and to all those who have lost family, friends and livelihoods in this dreadful tragedy.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and Spain for its leadership, together with Nepal, on resolution 69/280, which we have adopted today. The resolution is an important expression of global solidarity with the people who have suffered from this devastating disaster.

The United Kingdom is doing all it can to help Nepal recover from the earthquake. We are the largest international humanitarian donor to the response in Nepal, having provided $35 million to organizations working across affected districts, including $15 million to the United Nations flash appeal. We urge other donors to do more and urgently support the appeal.

Since the beginning of the crisis, we have provided logistical support to the Government of Nepal and the international response, including military aircraft. According to the humanitarian community in Nepal, additional logistical capacity is urgently required to meet the needs of affected communities ahead of the monsoon. The United Kingdom has offered and remains ready to make additional helicopter assets available to support the humanitarian response.

We strongly support efforts to support the long-term impacts of the earthquake, but our immediate focus must be on addressing immediate and urgent humanitarian needs. Swift action is required to address needs before the onset of the monsoon season, when roads will become impassable in some locations. Unless we collectively act quickly, the humanitarian context could deteriorate with the arrival of the monsoon. This scenario would lead to a further disaster — a protracted humanitarian response that could have been averted.

We believe, therefore, that the message is clear. Significant progress has been made, but there are still significant needs. As an international community, we need to act urgently and collectively in support of Nepal to address this remaining challenge and to avert even greater humanitarian need.

Mrs. Namgyel (Bhutan): At the outset, let me thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important plenary meeting to provide an update on the situation in Nepal. We welcome the adoption of

resolution 69/280, which we were pleased to co-sponsor. I would also like to place on record our thanks to Spain for having taken this initiative.

I would also like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in Nepal following the earthquake.

We wish once again to convey our deepest condolences to the people and Government of Nepal and to commend the Government of Nepal and the international community, in particular those on the ground in Nepal, for their dedicated and continued efforts in helping the people of Nepal get through this difficult situation. Bhutan, for its part, has made its own modest contributions to Nepal's relief efforts, based on the command of His Majesty the King and followed up with a personal visit by the Prime Minister of Bhutan, leading a team of relief personnel on 27 April.

As the Secretary-General's briefing made clear, Nepal has a difficult and challenging task ahead of it, not only to provide immediate relief, but also to undertake long-term reconstruction and rebuilding efforts. We understand the difficult circumstances and challenges under which Nepal would have to undertake these efforts and therefore urge the international community to continue to support Nepal in these difficult times. As a close friend and neighbour, and a fellow Himalayan country, Bhutan stands in solidarity and support with the people and Government of Nepal and wishes them strength as they work to overcome the challenging task of rebuilding their country.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his detailed briefing, which truly conveys the devastating impact of the earthquake in Nepal, which not only claimed a great many lives and wounded many people, but also destroyed much of the country. On behalf of the Government of Colombia, I wish to extend my deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Nepal and to the families of the victims following this natural disaster whose devastating effects call for the support of the international community, as made clear in the report of the Secretary-General and the resolution we have just unanimously adopted under the leadership of Spain (resolution 69/280). The resolution clearly lays out how the international community must continue channelling its support for emergency relief and for reconstruction and development activities.

Colombia understands the difficult situation Nepal is going through and, in solidarity with the fragile situation of its people at this difficult time, on 5 May we responded to their call by making a contribution of $200,000 to the fund. We hope that, with the assistance and cooperation of the international community, we can help Nepal return to the path towards development.

Mr. Lennartsson (Sweden): Sweden aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to make a few additional remarks. Let me begin by reiterating Sweden's heartfelt condolences to the Government of Nepal and the families of all those who lost their lives and our deepest sympathy to the many injured as a result of this terrible earthquake in Nepal. As many speakers before me have pointed out, they are not alone in this hour of need.

Sweden was happy to co-sponsor resolution 69/280, adopted today, which demonstrates the global solidarity with the Government and people of Nepal. The Swedish Government responded swiftly to the disaster on 25 April by immediately deploying personnel and deciding on financial support. So far, Sweden has contributed approximately $10 million. A significant part of this support is in response to the recently launched United Nations flash appeal in areas such as water, sanitation and psychosocial support, but also support to children's education and protection. Furthermore, we are providing funds to the World Food Programme's logistical support to reach hard-to-reach areas. Sweden strongly encourages other donors to urgently fund the Flash Appeal, which remains severely underfunded at only 14 per cent. This is critical in order to avert further humanitarian needs.

Sweden has also contributed by sending 40 Swedish specialists to assist in the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team, and experts in areas such as management, coordination, information and communication technology, logistics, construction, vehicles, temporary shelter and equipment. In addition, we have sent a group of Swedish specialists in coordination and needs assessments. As one of the major providers of voluntary core contributions to organization such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme, we stand by the United Nations efforts to provide a timely and efficient response to this disaster.

In closing, we would like to commend the Nepalese Government for its leadership in the response as well as for its foresight demonstrated by earlier investments in disaster preparedness. The Swedish Government

will continue to closely monitor the situation on the ground and stands ready to commit further assistance to operations in Nepal.

Mr. Forés Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I reaffirm our solidarity with the people and Government of Nepal and extend our condolences to them upon the devastating human and material damage wrought by the earthquakes of 25 April and 12 May and their aftershocks. Cuba wishes to share its modest experience in dealing with natural disasters in the hope that it may be useful to the people of Nepal.

Following in our long tradition of solidarity with other nations facing difficulties, a team of 49 Cuban international experts specialized in disaster response and the management of major epidemics, including 25 doctors of various specialties, traveled to Kathmandu. The group of health professionals is now on the ground putting in place conditions for the deployment of a field hospital that will provide services, including a surgical unit, sterilization, an intensive care unit, diagnostic tools including X-rays, sterilization and a semi-automated ultrasonic laboratory, as well as consultation and rehabilitation services, which will be the most important work in the days ahead.

We reiterate our willingness to continue supporting, selflessly and in solidarity, disaster-stricken countries that are in need of assistance. Moreover, we call on the United Nations system and the international community to shoulder their responsibilities to developing countries by helping them to improve their disaster prevention and response capacities. In that regard, one efficient way of helping the brotherly people of Nepal would be to cover the financial costs of its external debt. Our delegation fully supports the draft resolution under consideration and is one of its sponsors.

Ms. Ponce (Philippines): At the outset, allow me to express once again the Philippines' deepest condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of Nepal for the terrible loss of lives, extensive damage to property and destruction of Nepal's important cultural sites caused by the earthquakes of 25 April and 12 May. We also express our condolences and sympathy to the people of its neighbouring countries, Bangladesh, China and India, who also suffered loss of lives and property. The Philippines affirms its support for Nepal and thanks Spain for its initiative and coordination of this resolution, which we are honoured to co-sponsor.

The second earthquake that struck Nepal showed us that disasters do not wait. International assistance is critical from the onset, and we are heartened by the spirit of solidarity, cooperation and willingness that suffused the negotiation of resolution 69/280. As the resolution equally emphasizes, relief efforts are but a part of the scale of humanitarian assistance needed. They must be accompanied from the onset by reconstruction, rehabilitation and development programmes that are anchored in the principles of resilience and building back better. And as pointed out by Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos at last week's briefing, risk awareness and reduction must be built into those efforts. In so doing, we particularly need to be mindful of the special needs and challenges of Nepal as a least developed, landlocked country emerging from a conflict.

We also agree that there is a need to direct assistance to prevention by further strengthening national capacities at all levels, including effective and efficient governance and institutions, and to also integrating a gender perspective and the needs of the most vulnerable groups, including children and older people, and in all relevant aspects related to disaster management and rehabilitation. In these, an important guidepost is the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Our Metropolitan Manila Development Authority has deployed a rescue team to assist in the retrieval and rehabilitation operations. The Philippine Red Cross has also sent two teams, including a medical team that has joined the Canadian Red Cross in setting up an emergency field hospital focusing on providing maternal and child health care. We intend to further assist in the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

As a country that experienced the magnitude of destruction wrought by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, the Philippines is well aware of the vital importance of coordinated humanitarian assistance from the international community in such situations of natural disasters, not just for the aid and expertise provided, but for lifting the spirits of those affected, in the knowledge that there is a community behind them and with them. We are optimistic that, with the leadership of the Government of Nepal and the coordinated assistance of the international community, the challenges of this tragic disaster will be adequately addressed.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): First of all, I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting and the Secretary-General for his briefing. I also commend Spain for its leadership in introducing resolution 69/280.

On behalf of the people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I wish to express my heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the Government and people of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal for the losses of life, injuries and the huge damages caused by the devastating earthquake of 25 April and the subsequent earthquake of 12 May. As Saadi Shirazi, the great Iranian poet of the thirteenth century, wrote,

> "Humans are the limbs of the same body, and are from the same essence in their creation. When the conditions of the time hurt one of these parts, other parts will suffer from discomfort as well. If you are indifferent about the misery of others, it is not deserving to call you a human being."

The people and the Government of Iran, who have suffered immensely from natural disasters, including some big earthquakes in the past decades, share the pain of their Nepalese brothers and sisters. Iran has dispatched emergency humanitarian supplies to the quake-stricken people of Nepal, and we remain committed to further assisting the victims of this tragedy.

Mr. Munir (Pakistan): I take this opportunity to reiterate the profound condolences of the Government and the people of Pakistan to the Government and the people of Nepal at the colossal loss of life and property resulting from the 25 April earthquake and its continuing aftershocks. We stand in solidarity with our Nepalese brothers and sisters at this difficult time. I would also like to thank Nepal and Spain for steering the important resolution 69/280, which signals the resolve and commitment of the international community to providing all needed assistance to Nepal and to supporting it along the long-term road to recovery. We were pleased to co-sponsor the resolution and hope that its promise and commitment will be fully translated into action.

As a fellow State member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region, Pakistan immediately responded to the dire situation in Nepal by rushing emergency relief goods and critical medical supplies. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif issued a special directive to provide all possible assistance to Nepal in a timely manner. Our relief assistance, which is still continuing, includes the establishment of a 30-bed field hospital, a 38-member urban search-and-rescue team with sophisticated equipment, and 10 aeroplane-loads of relief goods, including medicines, rice, ready-to-eat meals, tents and blankets. Nepalese medical students studying in Pakistani medical colleges have also been assisted to return home to help in the relief operations. The chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority of Pakistan has visited Nepal and met with Nepalese leaders and officials to assess the situation and the need for further assistance from Pakistan.

In conclusion, let me reassure the Government and the people of Nepal that Pakistan stands ready to provide additional assistance as per their needs.

Mr. Haque (Bangladesh): I would like to express our gratitude to Spain and Nepal for introducing resolution 69/280. Bangladesh is pleased to have co-sponsored the resolution.

On behalf of the people of Bangladesh, we express our deepest condolences to the victims of the devastating earthquake that shook Nepal on 25 April and then on 12 May. We hope that the people and Government of Nepal will be able to overcome their losses with the help of Nepal's friendly neighbours. When the earthquake shook Nepal, it also shook many areas of Bangladesh, where thousands of people took refuge in open fields to avoid the aftershocks. A few people died in Bangladesh as well. The honourable President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh expressed their deep condolences for the losses caused by the devastating earthquake in Nepal, one of our closest neighbours and a valued member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

In the wake of the recent devastating earthquake in Nepal, the Government of Bangladesh was among the first countries to send a humanitarian assistance team to Nepal. The Government of Bangladesh took an immediate decision to send relief materials and a medical team immediately. All the airports in Bangladesh have been opened to foreign countries who want to send relief materials to Nepal. The Government of Bangladesh has already talked to India to ensure that the relief materials could go to Nepal through our Banglabandha land port using Indian territories.

Bangladesh was one of the first countries to send a medical team, comprising 70 members of medical donors plus technicians and nurses. The medical team was deployed in the Lalitpur district of Kathmandu to provide medical treatment to the earthquake victims. As of today, the Bangladeshi medical team has provided medical services to a few thousand Nepalese. In addition, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed an

additional 10,000 metric tons of rice and an additional quantity of water to earthquake-hit Nepal. Besides the Bangladeshi Government, the headquarters of many non-governmental organizations in Bangaladesh have extended their support by sending relief materials to the earthquake victims in Nepal. A concert for Nepal will be held on 21 May in an effort to raise funds for the victims of the earthquake of Nepal.

The people of Bangladesh feel strongly for the friendly and courageous people of Nepal, and Bangladesh will remain at the side of the disaster-struck people of Nepal and provide all assistance possible.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his important briefing. I also thank my colleagues, the Ambassadors of Spain and Nepal, for having proposed resolution 69/280, which we fully endorse as co-sponsors.

Today the international community comes together to acknowledge and offer our deepest sympathies to the people of Nepal, who are reeling from a recent series of earthquakes that have caused thousands of deaths and affected millions more. The United Arab Emirates would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening the important briefing on this urgent humanitarian situation facing Nepal and the broader region.

We have over 100,000 Nepalese living throughout the United Arab Emirates, who work alongside people of over 200 different nationalities represented in our country. When a shocking tragedy such as this happens, United Arab Emirates citizens and residents feel the human impact right away. Our hearts go out to those who lost friends and family as a result of the earthquakes, and we are keen to do as much as we can to bring people to safety and provide humanitarian aid to provide immediate relief and mitigate the impact of the disruption.

Upon learning of the earthquake, 87 members of the United Arab Emirates search-and-rescue team from the Abu Dhabi police department were deployed to Nepal. Working closely with the United Nations Disaster Assessment Coordinator, our team provided logistical support, including the use of unmanned drones to capture footage of hard-to-reach areas to assess the integrity of damaged buildings in Nepal. Team members also offered medical services to patients, as well as equipment to hospitals and training to Nepalese doctors and nurses. Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos met with our teams on the ground and offered valuable insights on specific needs that we responded to. Philanthropic organizations within the United Arab Emirates mobilized resources quickly to provide humanitarian aid to those in remote areas. With a generous donation from Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, Chairwoman of the General Woman's Union, the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent Authority has been able to provide aid to over 30,000 families throughout Nepal. Our contributions from across the United Arab Emirates have resulted in the deployment of humanitiarian aid to remote areas of Nepal and the construction of field hospitals to help in the ongoing relief operations.

We need to do more and we will. Today our focus is on relief, but we should not forget the role that preparation can play in future crises like this. We should continue to invest in countries efforts' to invest in disaster risk reduction so that they can become more resilient to disasters. In this regard, we echo the statement made by the observer of the European Union that adequate safeguards must be put in place to protect the most vulnerable, specifically women, children and boys. It is our hope that those affected by this earthquake will soon be able to return to their homes and life as normal as soon as possible. In order to do this the international community must not turn its focus away from this humanitarian crisis too soon. There is still so much more to be done.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): On behalf of the Government and people of Nepal and myself, I wish to express our deepest gratitude to you, Sir, for convening this meeting today at this crucial hour in support of Nepal in the wake of a series of earthquakes that have left the country devastated. I thank you for your opening statement, highlighting the need on the ground, and I also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing, with its graphic account of the dire situation on the ground and of the needs, including those of the remotest parts of Nepal, at this hour.

On 25 April, three weeks ago, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit Nepal. Together with dozens of powerful aftershocks of up to 6.8 in magnitude, it has consumed over 8,000 lives, injured over 18,000 people and rendered more than 600,000 houses uninhabitable. The earthquake left 3 million people without shelter in Kathmandu valley and several outlying districts to the west, north and east. Two days ago, just as we commenced

the transition to relief and recovery, Nepal was struck again by a quake nearly as powerful. That earthquake, with its own set of aftershocks, tore down the already debilitated buildings and structures that had withstood the first episode. Thousands of houses in the outlying districts in the north-east and east of Kathmandu valley have been levelled; hundreds of people have been killed and many injured. While the earthquakes have imposed havoc and ruin on Kathmandu, their effect on rural Nepal, sequestered and beyond the reach of immediate help, is on a scale scarcely imaginable.

Amid this crisis, the show of support from Member States and from all corners of the globe — both institutional and individual — has been tremendous. We are grateful for the outpouring of sympathy and solidarity we have received. The concern of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the determination with which he sought to respond to the crisis, both personally and through the United Nations system, are highly appreciated. The visit to Nepal by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos, together with the visits by the leaders of the European Union and the World Food Programme, brought moral support to the ground, while the people already on the ground are working tirelessly around the clock.

It has been deeply moving to witness the generosity and spontaneity with which the first responders acted in the aftermath of the 25 April earthquake. We are grateful to our immediate neighbours, India and China, and all other countries — from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation member States to our long-standing development partners and a raft of multilateral organizations and institutions, from the United Nations to the European Union. These actors have directly contributed to the rescue and relief operations. Hundreds of people were rescued alive and treated. Many more friends have contributed since then. Nepal cherishes deeply these friendships, which have lent us strength and hope in the face of this great calamity, but it is imperative to remember that it is not only Nepali nationals who have suffered. Our hearts go out to the families of our friendly countries' nationals who succumbed to the disaster. We hope for their quick recovery.

The scale of destruction of physical and social infrastructure is immense. In the districts hardest hit, hardly a school or health post still stands. The roads to these areas were shut off and access to vital public services cut off. The rescue and relief effort under way has been hampered by landslides and heavy rainfall time and again. The prospects for the future look grim. Tens of thousands who had just crossed the poverty line run the risk of falling back into absolute poverty. Past development achievements, including the progress on the Millennium Development Goals, stand to suffer major setbacks and our hope to graduate from least developed country status by 2022 may be severely diminished.

Beyond the economic and human impact is the pain of a lost past, our historical, cultural and archaeological heritage, which endowed us with values and an identity that have been damaged, perhaps decimated, by the powerful shocks we have experienced. It is heartbreaking to see centuries-old monuments and temples, many of them World Heritage Sites, reduced to rubble.

In his briefing, the Secretary-General underscored that the immediate and most exigent challenge is providing shelter for the millions who are now homeless. The monsoon season is fast approaching, and temporary shelters must be set up in the next few weeks. We need to rehabilitate bridges and roads and reinstate schools and health posts. We should also do everything possible to enable us not to miss the planting season, which is just around the corner. The Government of Nepal is committed to yoking the relief and recovery phase of post-disaster management to the longer-term goals of rebuilding and reconstruction. For that, it will mobilize already existing central and district-level mechanisms, which will need the means necessary to ensuring that the recovery can progress seamlessly towards rebuilding and reconstruction, avoiding any unnecessary duplication of effort or waste of scarce resources.

On 27 April, the Government appealed to the international community for assistance and set up a national reconstruction fund, consisting initially of $2 billion, with $200 million earmarked from its own resources, for the immediate rebuilding of vital infrastructure, homes and heritage sites. A full assessment of the damage and financing needs for reconstruction is being conducted by our national planning commission, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and other development partners. The eventual total needed could amount to several billion dollars. The Government is counting on the generous support of Nepal's development partners to enable it to meet these

challenges. To that end, we welcome the launch of the United Nations pledge appeal and call on all Member States to contribute generously in order to provide the earthquake's victims with lifesaving assistance in the next three months, without which the humanitarian situation will be dire.

I would like to assure all the friends of Nepal here today that, just as they have hoped and prayed for and expressed confidence in our ability to achieve, the Nepalese people will emerge stronger from this crisis. We are determined to do it. For that, we need greater support and cooperation, particularly in the form of substantial, sustained financial resources from our international development partners.

Nepal has been trying to prepare for disasters such as this for years. Although we have enacted laws, established institutions and stocked supplies and harvests for several years, in the end our capacity has fallen far short of what is required. With a landlocked and least-developed mountain economy that has recently emerged from conflict, Nepal could not prepare adequately for a disaster of this magnitude. Yet under the circumstances, the Government has acted promptly to mobilize its own resources and coordinate outside support as efficiently as possible.

Nepal is in a precarious situation at this time, wading uncertainly in waters that are too deep. But we have full confidence in the support of our friends and in our own strength and determination to move past and recover from this calamity and build a better home. In the midst of chaos and in the wake of disaster, it is inspiring to see how selflessly the Nepali people have come together, at home and abroad, to come to one another's aid. It is inspiring because it is an augury of change. The hope that Nepalis have for their country, the work they are putting into rebuilding Nepal and the confidence they have in its resilience — these are the ingredients of progress. A country mired in a protracted political transition for several years is now witnessing an unprecedented unity of purpose among political parties and leaders for facing the challenge together, creating a political climate conducive to rapid social and economic development. On 13 May, the Constituent Assembly, which is also the country's national parliament, resolved unanimously that all its constituents will rise to the challenge and guide our country out of this catastrophe.

We are confident that resolution 69/280, adopted this morning with an overwhelming number of sponsors, will be instrumental in facilitating any and all initiatives that will be needed to realize that dream. We are grateful to the Spanish leadership for bringing the United Nations membership together in global solidarity with Nepal by way of the resolution. I would like to sincerely thank Mr. Román Oyarzun Marchesi, the Permanent Representative of Spain and my good friend, for his efforts and for his moving introduction of the resolution. I would also like to take this opportunity to express once again the Government of Nepal's deep appreciation to all friendly countries for their efforts to finally shape the resolution, and to thank all delegations from the bottom of my heart for their steadfast support to Nepal and for the adoption of today's resolution, making us truly feel that Nepal is not alone.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 69.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.

United Nations A/69/PV.91

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

91st plenary meeting
Thursday, 28 May 2015, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mendonça e Moura (Portugal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Agenda item 136 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/69/722/Add.7)

The Acting President: Before proceeding to the items on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/69/722/Add.7, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/69/722/Add.6, Tonga has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Request for the inclusion of an additional item submitted by the Secretary-General (A/69/231)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take up a request submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/69/231 relating to the election of members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law.

In his note, the Secretary-General requests, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-ninth session, under agenda item 112, entitled "Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections", of an additional sub-item entitled "Election of members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law".

Owing to the nature of the sub-item, unless there is an objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees to waive the relevant provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this additional sub-item in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include in the agenda of its current session, under agenda item 112, entitled "Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections", an additional sub-item entitled "Election of members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law", under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters"?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Owing to the nature of the sub-item, the Secretary-General also requests that it be

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considered directly in plenary meeting. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the sub-item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that this additional sub-item becomes sub-item (e) of agenda item 112 in the agenda of the current session.

Agenda item 112 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(a) Election of twenty members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Note by the Secretary-General (A/69/291/Add.3)

The Acting President: Pursuant to General Assembly decision 42/450 of 17 December 1987, and upon nomination by the Economic and Social Council, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Members will recall that, at its 32nd plenary meeting, held on 29 October 2014, the General Assembly elected 13 members to the Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2015. Members will also recall that, at its 68th plenary meeting, held on 10 December 2014, the Assembly elected three members to the Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2015. Members will further recall that, at its 85th plenary meeting, held on 16 April 2015, the Assembly elected Portugal to the Committee for a term of office beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2017.

Members will recall that by its decision 2015/201 B of 8 April 2015, the Economic and Social Council postponed the nomination of three members from the Western European and other States for election by the General Assembly, one member for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2015, and two members for terms beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2017. By the same decision, the Council also postponed the nomination of one member from the Asia-Pacific States for election by the General Assembly for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2017.

In this connection, the Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/69/291/Add.3. As indicated in that document, by its decision 2015/201 D of 15 May 2015, the Economic and Social Council nominated the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for election by the General Assembly for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2017.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on the basis of dispensing with the secret ballot?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland elected as a member of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a term beginning on 28 May 2015 and expiring on 31 December 2017?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Members are reminded that the Economic and Social Council decided to further postpone the nomination of three members from the Western European and other States for election by the General Assembly; one member for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2015, one member for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2017, and one member for a term beginning on 1 January 2016 and expiring on 31 December 2018. The Council also decided to postpone the nomination of one member from the Asia-Pacific States for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2017.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 112.

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Draft resolution (A/69/L.71)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now resume its consideration of agenda item 14 to take

action on a draft resolution entitled "Saving the cultural heritage of Iraq", issued as document A/69/L.71. Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on agenda item 14 and adopted resolutions 69/139 and 69/140 at its 72nd plenary meeting on 15 December 2014.

I will now read out a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Sam Kutesa.

> "In April, we gathered here at the United Nations as I convened a high-level thematic debate on promoting tolerance and reconciliation. The debate brought together political and religious leaders representing diverse nations, geographies and faith communities in an expression of their support for dialogue and mutual understanding in the face of the disquieting rise of extremism and violence worldwide. Over the course of two days, speakers emphasized the importance of enhancing respect for religious and cultural diversity. Many also stressed the urgent need to protect artifacts of cultural heritage from destructive attacks at the hands of violent extremists. As was highlighted during that debate, we must collectively uphold the principles of tolerance and respect, while promoting diversity and fostering inclusiveness. We must also work together to uphold respect for human rights and freedom of thought, belief and expression.
>
> "It is deeply concerning to witness the destruction of irreplaceable artifacts of humankind's shared cultural heritage. Such barbaric and senseless attacks are taking place with alarming frequency not only in Iraq, but also in Afghanistan, Syria, Mali and elsewhere. By destroying invaluable cultural icons found in museums, libraries, archives, archaeological sites and places of worship, extremists are exacerbating conflicts, instigating violence and perpetuating fear among societies. Such attempts to obliterate humankind's collective history must be stopped immediately, by all necessary means, in accordance with applicable international law. I would also add that those responsible for such acts must be held accountable.
>
> "Cultural heritage is of exceptional value and interest to all peoples of the world and must be preserved. In that context, it is essential that the international community work together to protect elements of cultural heritage in Iraq and elsewhere. I thank UNESCO for its contribution and in particular for its work in conserving heritage and taking measures to protect cultural property at risk. I welcome the draft resolution (A/69/L.71) before us today as an important step forward in saving our shared histories, and I would like to thank the delegations of Germany and Iraq for taking this initiative."

I now give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I am honoured to speak at today's discussion on the culture of peace and the very serious topic of the draft resolution before us today, "Saving the cultural heritage of Iraq" (A/69/L.71). I would like to thank the Governments and delegations of Iraq and Germany for this initiative. The number of sponsors of the draft resolution is truly heartening and impressive.

We stand here today, I know, with a deep sense of serious and historic responsibility. There is something at stake in this venerable Hall that relates to the core values of the United Nations and to our duties with respect both to history and to the challenges ahead of us. The destruction of cultural heritage bears witness to a senseless form of violent extremism that seeks to destroy the past, the present and the future of human civilization. That it is taking place today in Iraq, the cradle of Mesopotamian civilization, represents a loss not only for the Iraqi people, but for all of humankind. The international community must do everything in its power, as the President just said, to halt the destruction of Iraq's cultural heritage and to hold the perpetrators to account.

Tragically, this type of cultural destruction does not stop with the case of Iraq. Other countries in the region and beyond have seen similar serious crimes. In recent years we have seen them committed in Afghanistan, in Syria, in Mali, but rarely — let us think about this — in times before that. It is sad testimony about the state of affairs in the world today. The destruction of cultural heritage worldwide has reached an unprecedented scale. It is being used as a tactic of war or conflict in order to terrify populations, finance criminal activities and spread hatred, creating polarization and divisions among people. To respond, we need coordinated action, improved information-sharing and strengthened legal foundations, in both affected countries and neighbouring States, and throughout the international community.

We should also today commend the work of UNESCO and its partners for their work, both by themselves and in assisting Member States in dealing with this new global problem. I particularly want to commend Ms. Irina Bokova for her personal commitment to the issue. The fact that she has come today from Paris for this meeting is a testimony to her commitment and that of UNESCO.

I particularly urge all Member States, in cooperation with other relevant authorities, not least INTERPOL, to prevent the trade in items of cultural, scientific and religious importance illegally removed from Iraq and other countries. Through today's draft resolution, the General Assembly is sending a strong message of worldwide support for the people and the Government of Iraq on a question of their national identity. I wish to reaffirm the determination of the United Nations system, the General Assembly and all Member States in their support for these endeavours.

Let today be a moment of deep reflection on our common humanity and on our shared responsibility to defend values and principles that are under attack but which must be upheld by all of us with firm and principled determination.

The Acting President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Maria Böhmer, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.71.

Ms. Böhmer (Germany): It is a privilege for Germany to introduce the draft resolution A/69/L.71, entitled "Saving the cultural heritage of Iraq", which we drafted together with our Iraqi partners.

I would like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson for his vivid description of the situation, and I offer my heartfelt thanks for the welcome I have received.

All of us have been profoundly shocked by the barbaric attacks on Iraq's cultural heritage perpetrated by the terrorist organization the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. We all remember our feelings of anger and impotence at the videos showing militants destroying the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hatra and ravaging Mosul's museums or the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud, using sledgehammers and Caterpillars to put an abrupt and violent end to thousands of years of history. Their objective is clear. By obliterating the visible traces of history and civilization, these terrorists want to destroy the foundations of a peaceful civil society and a unified country. They want to erase the soul and the identity of the people of Iraq. What they do not destroy, they loot and sell abroad in order to finance their terrorism from the spoils.

The attacks on the cultural heritage of Iraq are a test case for all of us. Iraq is a cradle of our common civilization. We cannot leave it to face this challenge alone; its heritage has been entrusted to the care of all of humankind. The international community must do all it can to put an end to these war crimes. And this is what these attacks are and what they should be called, with all the consequences this entails — war crimes that need to be prosecuted.

We are alarmed that these terrible crimes may be only part of a worrying trend to use intentional attacks on unique cultural heritage as a tactic of war. From Hatra to Bamiyan or Timbuktu, the cultural heritage of thousands of years has been attacked and destroyed, and we are watching with concern the current escalation near the world heritage site of Palmyra.

Together with our Iraqi partners, Germany is therefore introducing draft resolution A/69/L.71 to save the cultural heritage of Iraq, as we did when the Taliban were destroying the Buddha statues of Bamiyan (see resolution 55/243). With the support of the General Assembly, the draft resolution we introduce today will deliver a resounding and united message. The draft resolution condemns these barbaric acts of destruction and looting of the cultural heritage of Iraq. The draft resolution expresses outrage that attacks on cultural heritage are being used as a tactic of war. It calls for an immediate halt to the wanton destruction of Iraq's cultural heritage, affirms that such attacks may amount to war crimes and calls upon all States to hold the perpetrators of such attacks accountable.

The draft resolution affirms the General Assembly's support for the Iraqi Government in protecting the heritage of Iraq. It calls upon all States to assist Iraq in fighting against trafficking in cultural property and in repairing, restoring and conserving damaged or destroyed cultural heritage. The draft resolution urges all States to counter the trafficking of cultural property through better national and international regulations. Specifically, it urges the adoption of measures to ensure that all traders in cultural property are required to provide verifiable documentation of provenance and export certificates.

The draft resolution also calls on States to enhance the protection, preservation and documentation of cultural heritage endangered by armed conflicts. It calls upon community leaders to stand up and unambiguously reaffirm that there is no justification for the destruction of humankind's cultural heritage.

In conclusion, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the President of the General Assembly, to the Secretariat, to UNESCO — in particular to UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova — to the over 90 sponsors, to all the delegations that participated in the informal consultations and especially to Ambassador Alhakim and his team for their dedication and close cooperation.

Let us stand together against such barbarism and speak with one single voice for the preservation of the culture and diversity that we have inherited from the past, because without them we have no future.

The Acting President: I thank the Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany for having travelled all the way to New York to underline the importance of the matter addressed by the draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution A/69/L.71, entitled "Saving the cultural heritage of Iraq".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Pollard (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to announce that Guatemala is not a sponsor of the draft resolution. I should also like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed on the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/69/L.71: Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Bahrain, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Costa Rica, Eritrea, Mali, Mongolia, Nigeria, Palau, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and Turkmenistan.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.71?

Draft resolution A/69/L.71 was adopted (resolution 69/281).

The Acting President: I now call on representatives who wish to make statements following the adoption.

Mr. Alhakim (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of my delegation, I welcome the adoption today of resolution 69/281, entitled "Saving the cultural heritage of Iraq". I thank the German Minister of State, Ms. Maria Böhmer, for her support. Our thanks and appreciation also go to the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations as our partner in this initiative. We thank the Director-General of UNESCO for her presence at this historic meeting. We also thank and express our appreciation to all the sponsors for their valuable input during the negotiations on the resolution, which was adopted by consensus. Their support provides further impetus for this important resolution, which is of great significance to all humankind and particularly for Iraq.

The destruction of the cultural heritage of Iraq, the cradle of civilization, is no less barbaric and serious than the killing of Iraqis, because it threatens to erase the multicultural history of Iraq, which has been the hallmark of our country for millennia. In order to confront this challenge, Iraq has undertaken, with the assistance of our friends among the United Nations membership, serious and timely measures to protect Iraqi artefacts from the smuggling and illegal trafficking that fund terrorist activities.

The resolution adopted today falls within that framework. Its adoption is a testament to the international community's determination and commitment to stand by the State of Iraq and its people in defiance of criminals and to bring to justice those whose goal is to destroy our past, present and future. It serves as an important step in strengthening the legal commitments of Member States to preventing the sale and smuggling of our heritage by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other terrorist groups associated with Al-Qaida. It also underscores the importance of putting an end to the smuggling, selling and acquisition of artefacts, and requires the restitution of those artefacts to Iraq or, for that matter, to any other country that faces such a problem.

The resolution highlights the importance of the United Nations in developing international instruments that enhance the capacity of Member States to protect the human cultural heritage, and it is aligned with the stated position that we have repeatedly reaffirmed before United Nations bodies as being among our priorities. Those include, in addition to the protection

of our heritage, the fight against ISIL, the return of internally displaced persons and the restitution of security and stability to our country.

The resolution is timely, given the increasing frequency of terrorist attacks on cultural heritage in various parts of the world. The situation in Palmyra, Syria, is another case in point. The challenge that we face requires global support in order to retrieve the stolen Iraqi artefacts. Iraq continues to strive to protect its cultural heritage, including by planning future projects to that end.

I thank Member States that sponsored and supported the resolution. I reiterate our thanks and appreciation to Germany for its valuable partnership and to UNESCO and its representative for their valuable support for Iraq. I also thank the United Nations, the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, as well as the President and Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly and the President's team, for their valuable efforts.

Mr. Winid (Poland): On behalf of Chile, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Italy and Poland, I would like to express our profound appreciation to the Permanent Missions of Germany and Iraq for their efforts in the preparation of resolution 69/281, entitled "Saving the cultural heritage of Iraq", which we co-sponsored.

Long known as the cradle of civilization, Iraq is home to a great number of cultural heritage sites that are a precious testament to its history. However, Iraq's cultural legacy remains at great risk as disastrous losses have already occurred. Any further damage or destruction of its cultural heritage must be immediately put to an end. We believe the resolution to be a necessary step in that direction and would like to assure everyone gathered in the Hall of our commitment to that very end.

Just two months ago, during the twenty-eighth regular session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, we delivered a statement on behalf of Chile, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Italy and Poland in which we expressed our deepest concern about the growing number of acts of intentional destruction of cultural heritage, as well as the organized looting and illicit trafficking of cultural property, which are occurring today on an unprecedented scale. The statement was supported by 137 countries, which underscored the urgent nature of the problem.

It is not only Iraqi heritage that has been put in danger; it is our collective heritage that might be diminished. The international community must learn about the importance of protecting the records of human history; therefore, we must take all necessary actions to ensure that its uniqueness is preserved. It is our responsibility to respect and protect the cultural heritage of our societies. For that reason, we join the many sponsors of the resolution in strongly condemning the intentional destruction of cultural heritage wherever it occurs and whoever the perpetrator.

Mr. Aldahhak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation welcomes the adoption of resolution 69/281, entitled "Saving the cultural heritage of Iraq". I thank the sponsors for having submitted the text. The delegation of my country, the Syrian Arab Republic, joined the sponsors of the resolution, thereby underlining our support for the efforts of the Government and the people of Iraq to safeguard and protect their civilizational and cultural heritage from acts of barbaric terrorism.

We hope that our efforts to safeguard the cultural and human heritage will be commensurate with the threats posed to cultural and historical sites in Iraq and my own country, Syria, by the Daesh terrorist organization, which is now occupying the city of Palmyra, and other extremist terrorist groups linked to Al-Qaida. We also hope that the resolution will allow us to speak with one voice; send a unified message to the Governments of countries supporting terrorism, demanding that they desist from supporting takfiri terrorist groups and inciting violence, terrorism and hatred; and prevent the destruction of priceless antiquities by the ignorant and the enemies of civilization and the trafficking of those antiquities to finance terrorism.

The artefacts stolen from Syria and Iraq and smuggled to countries worldwide, which are often huge and cannot be trafficked easily, could not have reached those countries without the support of Governments, organized criminal gangs and corrupt networks helping to finance terrorism. This is a very immediate challenge and requires a response that proves that we are truly a United Nations and not merely an Organization in name only.

The Syrian Arab people will continue to offer assistance to INTERPOL and the United Nations and its specialized agencies, including those combating terrorism, to prevent the trafficking of Syrian and

Iraqi artefacts and their transformation from pieces of incalculable human value into mere objects to be used to finance inhumane criminal terrorism that has nothing in common with any religion or civilization.

I reiterate my country's support for the resolution that we have just adopted by consensus. The cultural heritage of Iraq is a source of pride for us all, and I therefore reiterate my thanks to the sponsors and to all countries that supported the draft resolution.

The Acting President: I should now like to consult with Member States with a view to giving the floor to Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. If there is no objection, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes, without setting a precedent, to invite Ms. Bokova to make a statement at this meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO.

Ms. Bokova (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization): The adoption of resolution 69/281, entitled "Saving the cultural heritage of Iraq", is a turning point in the mobilization of the international community against the destruction of cultural heritage, the looting of antiquities and the persecution of minorities that have lead to the destruction of the cultural diversity of Iraq. It marks a turning point in the fight against cultural cleansing in Iraq.

Never before in recent history have we seen such brutal and systematic destruction of cultural heritage used as a tactic of war to intimidate populations and to disseminate hatred. This is a war crime. Such destruction of heritage has also taken place in Mali, Syria and Afghanistan. All of us believe and feel that such attacks are not just against specific communities, specific religions or a specific world heritage. These are attacks against the very notion of a civilized order, against the humanity we share, and against the values that bind us together as a single human family.

The resolution resonates deeply with the mandate of UNESCO, as is indicated in many of its paragraphs. This is a test for the United Nations that calls on all of us to review the means by which we seek to defeat violent extremism.

(*spoke in French*)

The resolution sends the resounding message that cultural heritage is not merely collateral damage, but that its deliberate destruction is a war crime and an integral part of the humanitarian and security crisis. The resolution is evidence of our strong resolve to take action, with strong recommendations to stop the financing of terrorism, counter the ideology of hatred and stop illicit trafficking. The resolution complements Security Council resolution 2199 (2015), on the financing of terrorism. I believe that it sets forth a new strategy for the fight against violent extremism. I am already convinced that the resolution will have an impact, and I congratulate Germany and Iraq, as well as its more than 80 sponsors, for this initiative.

UNESCO will remain fully engaged with all the sponsors, particularly Germany, which will host the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Bonn next month. Again, we will use that opportunity to mobilize States to save the exceptional cultural heritage that belongs to all of humankind.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.